United Nations S/PV.4625 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4625th meeting

Wednesday, 16 October 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou	(Cameroon)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Yakimov
	China	Mr. Jiang Jiang
	Colombia	Mr. Franco
	France	Mrs. d'Achon
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Ramjuttun
	Mexico	Mrs. Arce de Jeannet
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Marsh

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Letter dated 10 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1132).

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02-64284 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Cambodia, Jamaica, Qatar, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ouch (Cambodia), Mr. Neil (Jamaica), Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar), Mr. Mahendran (Sri Lanka) and Mr. Jokonya (Zimbabwe) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): I thank you, Mr. President, for responding positively to the request of the Non-Aligned Movement in convening this meeting in the face of the enormous tragedy that seems to be in the making.

The fundamental question upon which we should premise our debate is whether we need to persevere in upholding the rule of law at the international level and pursue the question of Iraq's compliance within the parameters of international law, or whether we can afford to give a free hand to those whose possible actions would result in undermining international law in exchange for short-sighted gains, or whatever other reasons, plausible or not.

We believe that all States have a clear interest, as well as a clear responsibility, to defend the integrity of international law and order. Thus, any arbitrary unilateral approach outside international law that may endanger the fragile international security system and set a destructive precedent with far-reaching consequences should be resisted. Taking on Iraq unilaterally and outside international law would amount to short-sighted actions that may resolve a part of the problem, but will undoubtedly shake the foundations of the international security system predicated on the rule of law.

Here, I specifically refer to concepts, such as "regime change" and "pre-emptive strike", which are completely alien to and in conflict with international law. The former runs counter to peoples' right to self-determination, denying in this context the right of the Iraqi people to decide who should rule them. And the latter distorts, inter alia, the conventional understanding of the right of self-defence as clearly enshrined in customary international law and codified in the United Nations Charter. We caution each and every member of the Council against any decision that may, in one way or another, be interpreted as underwriting, promoting or endorsing such unprecedented and erroneous concepts as the ones I referred to earlier.

On the other hand and in view of recent developments and the unpleasant experience of the 1990s, the onus now rests on the Iraqi Government to efface every doubt about its intention to allow unfettered weapons inspections everywhere in the country. We call upon Iraq to take every necessary step to avert catastrophe, for the sake of its own people, all peoples in the region and international peace and the rule of law.

My country, as a State that suffered enormously in the 1980s as a result of the use of chemical weapons against its servicemen and civilians, attaches particular importance to the eradication of weapons of mass destruction in the entire region. This is the basis of my Government's steady call for the full implementation of Security Council resolutions on the disarmament of Iraq.

The decision by the Iraqi Government to allow the return of the United Nations weapons inspectors, which was welcomed by the international community, including my Government, was a necessary step in the right direction. That decision should now avert the cursory resort to military means and provide an opportunity for diplomacy to work. It should further open the way for full implementation of all Security Council resolutions on Iraq — including those on the release of prisoners of war and against the harbouring of terrorists. That implementation should lead to the lifting of sanctions, which the international community, including my Government, has steadily sought. Such a diplomatic approach, as presented, should be fully

explored. Should the diplomatic path prove fruitless, any other measures would have to be contemplated by the Council alone.

The United Nations should be given the opportunity, and should be empowered, to address this crisis effectively and in a timely manner. Any alternative to this approach would risk increasing uncertainty and bring about long-term instability in the region, a region already plagued with endemic problems.

The United Nations, as the universal Organization charged with the task of maintaining international peace and security, is legally competent and inherently capable of resolving the current crisis, which originated from actions taken by the Iraqi leadership in the 1980s and 1990s. We believe that the appropriate international mechanisms and relevant Security Council resolutions provide the necessary legal basis for international action aimed at making sure that Iraq ceases to pose a threat to regional stability and the security of its neighbours.

Moreover, the Council is in a position to adopt any new and realistic procedures it may deem necessary to ensure the smooth and complete implementation of the disarmament process. My delegation also believes that unity in the Council in the face of this crisis is of great importance to reaching a viable and lasting solution. Undoubtedly, the unified will of the international community, which sooner or later will find its expression through the Council, would be the best guarantee for the proper completion of this process. Therefore, any consideration given to unilateral action might only arouse further suspicion on the possible existence of a hidden agenda beyond the disarmament of Iraq, thus further charging and complicating the situation in the Middle East.

Attacking Iraq, and the enormous and predictable suffering that the Iraqi people would be subject to, will inevitably fuel further resentment everywhere, and not just in Iraq. It will sow seeds of new hatred that will feed instability for years to come. This dangerous situation is further exacerbated by the immunity and impunity that Israel has been guaranteed, despite its actual commission of the very same, if not more serious, acts of which Iraq has been accused. Some of those acts include non-compliance with, and even outright rejection of, numerous Security Council resolutions; seeking to acquire, and even possessing, weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons; and practising, and even declaring a policy of, State terrorism. Ideologues whose intimate relations with Israel are a matter of public record and who seek to further their own aims and want to remake the world in their own peculiar image, should understand beforehand that they, and they alone, would be responsible for any eventual adverse consequences.

We believe that the hassle-free entry of the weapons inspectors into Iraqi territory and the commencement of their work as soon as possible would be the next essential step in helping to silence the beating of war drums. Ultimately, a final peaceful resolution of this crisis would enhance the rule of law at the international level and demonstrate the ability of the United Nations and of multilateral diplomacy to defuse disputes and crisis situations. Undoubtedly, such an outcome, coupled with a real commitment by the Iraqi Government to live in peace with its neighbours, will greatly serve the cause of peace and stability in our region.

In closing, allow me to quote Secretary-General Kofi Annan who, in opening the general debate of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, wisely set the tone by strongly reaffirming the indispensable necessity and enduring relevance of multilateralism and multilateral institutions in efforts to maintain international peace, security and freedom for all. He further reiterated that every Government that is committed to the rule of law at home must also be committed to the rule of law abroad.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Ukraine. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for holding this public debate on an exceptionally important issue. The discussion concerning Iraq has been on the waiting list at the United Nations for quite a while. We are convinced that at this moment it is necessary to hear out the views of Member States, before the Council adopts any new resolution on Iraq that may directly affect the future role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Ukraine welcomes the agreement reached in Vienna on 1 October 2002 between the Government of

Iraq, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on practical arrangements for the resumption of international inspections in Iraq. We view as promising the assurances given by the Government of Iraq that unrestricted access to all sites would be granted to United Nations inspectors. We consider this as the next step towards full compliance by Iraq with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Ukraine believes that the international community should utilize to the full extent all the opportunities this decision provides to check Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions, specifically with regard to the development of weapons of mass destruction. That is why we call for the inspectors to return to Iraq as a matter of urgency, as well as for Iraq to provide all necessary conditions for the work of UNMOVIC and IAEA, and to cooperate closely with the international inspectors. In this connection Ukraine is ready to provide all necessary assistance and support, including sending Ukrainian experts to UNMOVIC in its work in Iraq.

We are fully confident that the United Nations inspectors would discharge their duties to the highest professional standards consistent with their mandate. The results of the inspections should play the definitive role in elaborating further steps of the United Nations concerning Iraq.

As a non-permanent member in the Security Council in 2000 and 2001, Ukraine stood for and continues to call on the Iraqi Government to strictly adhere to its commitments under all Security Council resolutions, especially with regard to the disarmament obligations that remain the main prerequisite for lifting Council sanctions.

The need for a peaceful solution of the issue of Iraq in a way that preserves the authority and credibility of the United Nations and international law, and preserves the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq, as well as peace and stability in the region, should be at the core of the Council's decision on Iraq.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that Ukraine favours continuing efforts in exploring all peaceful means to resolve the situation and to avoid a war that would cause further sufferings, first of all to the people of Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to extend to you, Mr. President, as a good friend, our congratulations and express my pleasure at seeing you presiding over the Security Council. Secondly, I would like to extend to you my thanks for responding to the request by the Non-Aligned Movement to convene this open meeting so that we, Members of the United Nations and of the international community that has mandated the Council to work on its behalf, may express our opinions.

The matter under consideration today — and I would like to stress this — is not about Iraq and Kuwait. This is a different issue that was discussed at the Arab Summit in Beirut, where they found solutions that we endorse. What we are here to consider is the situation between the United States, Iraq and the region as a whole.

Iraq has no problem with the Security Council or the United Nations; rather, it is a problem between United States and Iraq, indeed, between United States and the region as a whole. This is the reality that cannot be either circumvented or ignored.

What is the essence of the problem? Iraq informed the Secretariat and the Council that it welcomes the inspectors — they can come and inspect anything they wished to inspect. Now, who is preventing the resumption of the work of the inspectors? Is it Iraq? We are faced with truly bizarre contradictions here. Quite puzzling indeed!

Those who prevented the inspectors from going into Iraq are the same ones who are urging them to go back as soon as possible, and those who were calling for the resumption of the work of the inspectors are the same ones that are preventing them from resuming it. How bizarre! Iraq did not expel the inspection teams; they spent seven years and seven months there. They inspected everywhere but were never expelled. The Council did not ask them to leave. Who made them leave Iraq is a very important question. Why do we gloss over it?

It was said that Iraq is in possession of weapons of mass destruction, but Iraq denies it. It was said that Iraq has developed those weapons in the absence of the

inspectors, but Iraq said that it would accept their return. Then it was said that Iraq was setting conditions and obstacles, when Iraq has dropped all conditions and obstacles that would prevent the inspectors from fulfilling their tasks.

It is not a matter of weapons of mass destruction, searching for them or destroying them. It seems that this is not the objective — there is another objective. It was said that Iraq was cooperating with the terrorists, but it denied having any connection with any terrorist organization. The other party could not come up with any shred of evidence to prove the existence of any such connections.

We oppose terrorism and are against all terrorists, but we do not wish to fight terrorism with terrorism. The international community has agreed to fight terrorism but not to carry out acts of terrorism.

Iraq accepted all the conditions imposed on it. The wonder of wonders is that those who are responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security are calling and preparing for war, while those who have been accused of breaching international peace and security are calling for dialogue, peace, stability and negotiations. Those who claim to support freedom are those who are calling for war, while those who have been accused of being the enemies of freedom are calling for peace. We live in a world of contradictions.

What is the ultimate objective? This Council bears a major responsibility. If an act of aggression is unleashed against Iraq, it must be fully aware that international peace and security will be in grave danger. Why do we ask the Iraqi people to accept an insult to their dignity? Is the objective to find and destroy weapons of mass destruction, or is it the destruction of the dignity, independence and territorial integrity of the Iraqi people? Where are the human rights to which some pay lip service and that they claim to be defending? Are the Iraqi people not human beings whose dignity, independence and territorial integrity must be preserved? Do they not enjoy such rights?

What is unfolding is an attempt to control the entire region and to turn Iraq into a stationary base for the presence that seeks to control it. We are no longer deceived by any allegations. We are not children; we were not born yesterday. The solution lies in the prompt resumption of the work of the inspectors. There are no conditions or obstacles to that resumption, unless the dignity, humanity and independence of the Iraqi people are deemed to be conditions or obstacles. That must be refuted. Each one of us individually must reject for others what we will not accept for ourselves. We must do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

Weapons of mass destruction must be destroyed, not only in Iraq, but throughout the world and by all who possess them. Why not? Why can we not live in a world free from all weapons — not just weapons of mass destruction, but all kinds. Let each start with his own country. Why target Iraq alone? If we truly wish to see a world free from threats of all kinds, we must agree together on the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction and others, including conventional weapons.

Let us start a dialogue. Let us use the greatest gift God gave to human beings — the blessing of mind and speech. Human beings must use their minds and their tongues to solve their problems. Those who use their fangs, talons and brawn are mere animals that have been denied that God-given blessing. Why should we turn the world from a human place into a jungle? Why should we not resort to dialogue? Why are we avoiding dialogue? Why are we refusing to negotiate? Why do we resort to missiles and aircraft carriers? Why do we resort to bombs? Are these solutions to our problems? No; they create our problems. Will they bring peace and stability to the world? Never; they are counterproductive and lead to the opposite result. Any people that is subject to aggression has the right to defend itself by all means. Human beings themselves, by the simplest of means, will become weapons of mass destruction. Given that they are already dead, at least their death in self-defence will be dignified.

That is the direction in which Iraq is being pushed. Iraqis are a proud and courageous people. They will know very well how to defend themselves. The Council is responsible. We find everything we have read in the newspapers about the draft resolutions before the Council to be very inauspicious. They offer no reason for optimism. The 10 non-permanent members have had nothing to do with those draft resolutions. In other words, they have become exactly like us — mere spectators. This is wrong and must not continue. They are here to represent the majority of the world.

Incidentally, we appreciate and respect the positions of China, Russia and France. Those countries have demonstrated their devotion to international peace and security and their keen interest in not exposing the world to danger. It is incredible that the Council should continue to be held hostage. I would suggest to the 10 non-permanent members that they go back to the regional groups that nominated them with every new draft resolution in order to ascertain their position and to give voice to it here. Only in this way will the international community, represented by the United Nations, be represented here in the Council.

As things stand, we are nothing but extras, mere spectators. This is unbelievable. Where is the democracy that some talk about? What democracy is evinced in the work of the Council? Is this democracy? The United Nations is not allowed to participate. The ten non-permanent members are not allowed to participate and the other three are just fighting. What work is the Council doing on behalf of the international community? They have nothing to do with this. Where is the world being led? Where to? This is what causes fanaticism. I had said, in a statement before this Council, that if the insults and the demeaning of the Islamic and Arab peoples continue, they will provide the best atmosphere for fanatic and extremist groups in the Arab and Islamic world. I said that here in a previous statement. Please. Go back to it.

Today, in the light of the threats to the region, the Council is giving legitimacy to the worst and most fanatical of all groups. The masses will consider those movements and groups as expressions of their will. They will support them. I do not at all rule out that the next stage in the Arab world will be under the leadership of extremist Islamic groups, and I said that here before.

Those groups are the ones who are going to be in power because the official Arab regimes have lost their legitimacy. I told the Council here on a previous occasion that these Arab regimes no longer have a fig leaf to cover themselves with.

The extremists are ready and the oppressed Arab masses will be with them and behind them and will follow their directions. We will see what will happen to our world. Why do we not resort to our minds and intellects? Why do we not resort to dialogue? Why do we resort to the dialogue of tanks, missiles and bombs? Why?

Why do we resort to gunpowder, that deadly and destructive invention? I call upon the Council not to adopt any resolution that would demean the dignity of the Iraqi people or human rights in Iraq. Iraq said: please return. By all means, come in. Even the palaces are open. The whole of Iraq is open. Come in. What else do you want from Iraq?

There is no need for a further resolution, if you adopt one. What you have is sufficient and does not prevent the inspectors from fulfilling their task. Iraq has supported them. But do not include anything that would be imposed by political and economic pressures, by phone calls to the capitals or by meetings with the ambassadors in respective capitals. Council members are not here to represent their countries alone. Please go back to the constituencies, to the regional groups that have nominated you. Those regional groups will give you the position that you can express here.

The Arab world cannot endure any more. What is happening in Palestine is more than enough. The Council has not been able to do anything at all. It has been paralysed. Its resolutions have been paralysed. But when it comes to an Arab or Islamic country the Council is summoned to action in the middle of the night and on weekends and before the beginning of the work week.

What has happened in our region and outside it in the last few days is a warning bell. We strongly oppose such acts. If people sense danger, their reactions will not be organized; they will not be done by groups. They will be individual acts that cannot be predicted or tracked because they will be simply individual acts.

I advise the Council to take into account its responsibility and role in maintaining international peace and security. I advise the Council to call for the prompt return of the inspectors to resume their work. Then there will be no need for a pretext to attack Iraq. It has been attacked more than enough. At least 1.7 million Iraqi citizens have died. Even their food, their rice and wheat have to be approved by a committee here. What else does the Council want? What else is required? Even medication must be approved and come before a committee. What more is required of Iraq? Iraq has not expelled those inspectors. Ask who expelled them and who forced them to leave. How can we hold Iraq responsible for every single mistake?

I call upon members of the Council to take the honourable position not just in this world, but also

honourable in the eyes of God on the Day of Judgement, because we will all be brought to account as individuals, not as peoples, not as Governments.

I would like to reiterate our solidarity with Iraq. Incidentally, I would like to reaffirm that the leader of my country, Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi, has worked for the last two months, more than two months, with the brothers in Baghdad. He has been in touch with the United Kingdom at the highest level. He also mandated me to convey a message to the Secretary-General. I also conveyed a message from him to President George Bush. He has brought pressure on the brothers in Iraq to accept the return of the inspectors and not put any obstacles in their way.

We thank our brothers in Iraq for responding positively. I hope that the positive steps will be met with more positive steps. I hope the Council deals with Iraq the way Iraq has dealt with the Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, Mr. Yaya Mahmassani. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Mahmassani (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, permit me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month, wishing you every success in your important tasks. I also take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Tafrov for his able stewardship of the Council last month.

On 16 September 2002, following the tireless efforts by the Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Amr Moussa, Iraq accepted the return of inspectors of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) without restrictions or conditions, a step that was welcomed by the international community.

Following that, an agreement between Iraq and the Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC was reached in Vienna on the arrangements for the return of the weapons inspectors. World markets have been relieved, and the Dow Jones index gained $1 billion in one minute. That relaxation did not last for long, since some have requested that inspectors not return until a new draft resolution is prepared.

Iraq has declared that it is free of all weapons of mass destruction and that it is committed to all relevant Security Council resolutions. Therefore, we believe that the present situation requires the return of the inspectors to Iraq as soon as possible, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, in order to fulfil their tasks and to present a report to the Security Council so it can lift the sanctions imposed on Iraq. There is no reason for the delay in the Council's work, and there is no reason to prejudge the results of the inspectors and to prepare for war.

We would like to recall that Article 2 of the United Nations Charter states that all Member States shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.

The League of Arab States, at the Beirut Summit on 27 and 28 March 2002, completely rejected any strike against Iraq or any threat against the safety and security of any Arab country. We requested that sanctions against Iraq be lifted and called for respect for its territorial integrity and security. We also welcomed Iraq's reaffirmation of the Council's call for respect for the independence and sovereignty of Kuwait, and we have called for implementation of resolutions of international legitimacy and for adoption of policies of good intentions.

Security Council resolution 687 (1991) also called for the entire region of the Middle East to be free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Israel has rejected that and is the only nuclear State in the region. It has large stocks of nuclear weapons and biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction and the ability to strike any region in the Arab world.

Why does the Security Council not adopt a resolution to force Israel to dismantle its weapons of mass destruction? Why is there this double standard? Article 25 of the United Nations Charter states that Member States of the United Nations undertake to accept Security Council resolutions and implement them in accordance with the Charter. All Council resolutions should be implemented. Israel has violated scores of them in its conflict with the Arab side. Why does the Security Council not adopt a resolution forcing Israel to implement its resolutions?

The Secretary-General of the United Nations stated lately that every time he is in a press conference

he is asked about double standards. In its last issue, on 12 October 2002, the Economist magazine addressed this particular matter.

(*spoke in English*)

> "This question is no longer being asked by Arabs alone. 'No war against Iraq, Free Palestine' has become the slogan of anti-war demonstrations in Europe and America. The two conflicts have become entwined in the public mind in a way that the West's politicians cannot ignore. When he sought last week to talk his sceptical Labour Party into supporting action against Iraq, Tony Blair, Britain's Prime Minister, got his biggest cheer for the bit of his speech that said UN resolutions should apply in Palestine as much as Iraq."

(*spoke in Arabic*)

We are extremely concerned about the increasing possibility of war breaking out against an Arab country. A dark, ominous cloud is gathering on the horizon, threatening the peace and safety of the entire region. We call for the expeditious return of UNMOVIC inspectors to Iraq to fulfil their tasks in order to allow the region and the entire world to breathe easily again. We completely reject the waging of war against an Arab country. The imposition of a new military conflict on the Middle East will be a grave mistake that will be very difficult to contain or control. War against Iraq will open a Pandora's box. Violence and civil war will sweep the entire country, fragmenting it. This in turn will undermine the entire Arab region, which has already been plagued with extreme anger due to the Israeli occupation and preparations for another military attack against another brotherly State.

War against Iraq will annul the current world order, the United Nations Charter and international law. It would expose States, particularly those of the South, to the danger of attacks on the pretext of preventive measures, leading the entire world back to the era of the League of Nations.

Upholding the United Nations Charter, international legitimacy and the solidarity and unity of the international community is the only means to face up to the crises of the twenty-first century, to maintain international peace and security and to "save succeeding generations the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Thailand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand): Mr. President, allow me to join other distinguished representatives in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October, and through you to extend our appreciation to Ambassador Tafrov of Bulgaria for guiding the work of the Security Council last month.

Thailand welcomes the convening of this open debate of the Security Council on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, which is of utmost concern to the international community. Whatever decision the Council may take on Iraq will have direct bearing on international peace and security and will ultimately affect all of us. It is therefore vitally important that the wider United Nations membership is fully engaged in this process.

In this era of globalization, when crises in one area will inevitably have an impact in all corners of the globe, multilateralism and multilateral institutions remain mankind's best hope for the maintenance of international peace and security. As the most universal of all international organizations, the United Nations symbolizes our trust and faith in multilateralism. It remains the most appropriate framework for peaceful resolution of crises through diplomatic means. If the United Nations is to remain relevant, its Members' voices must be heard and respected.

I should like to take this opportunity to commend all concerned parties for making use of this Organization to try to resolve in a peaceful manner the escalating crisis with regard to Iraq. In order to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and pave the way for their reduction and eventual elimination, the multilateral regime must be upheld by all of us.

In this regard, while we welcome Iraq's announcement regarding receiving the United Nations inspectors unconditionally, we strongly urge Iraq to bear in mind that it has the responsibility and obligation to comply with all relevant Security Council

resolutions unconditionally and unreservedly. This includes, inter alia, providing immediate unconditional and unrestricted access for United Nations inspectors as required by the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We view as a positive development the recent fruitful discussions between Iraq and the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) in Vienna and the recent correspondence between Iraqi authorities and UNMOVIC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We hope that this dialogue will soon resolve all outstanding matters, thus paving the way for the return of United Nations inspectors to Iraq.

The present escalation of tensions, if allowed to continue, can only do more harm than good to the present situation in the Middle East as well as to international peace and stability. It will also have dire consequences for the global economy at a time when many economies are struggling to recover from financial crises, if not to overcome recessions. The reliance of many economies on the Middle East for trade, investment and supply of natural resources, including oil, means that any instability or outbreak of military action in the region could have severe adverse impacts on the livelihood and well-being of peoples all over the world. The economic recovery process pursued by developing countries may be stalled or even reversed. This is a no-win situation for everyone.

Furthermore, one of the dreadful consequences of the outbreak of military action is its devastating impact on innocent people and children. We therefore reiterate our plea to Iraq to comply unreservedly and unconditionally with all relevant Security Council resolutions.

We sincerely hope that the Security Council will take into account the views expressed at this open meeting in determining the most appropriate course of action — one which will resolve all outstanding issues and all threats to international peace and security in a peaceful manner.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Thailand for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Australia welcomes this opportunity to address the Security Council on an issue we consider to be of singular importance — Iraq's non-compliance with Security Council resolutions.

There has been considerable speculation about what has motivated the international community to pursue this issue so forcefully in recent months. All manner of conspiracy theories have been aired.

But let us be perfectly clear. This issue is about one thing and one thing only, and that is Iraq's continued failure to meet its commitments to the international community, embodied in at least nine Security Council resolutions.

Almost 12 years ago the international community, through the Security Council, acted resolutely to expel Iraq from Kuwait. In the aftermath of that conflict, the Security Council further set out, in plain, unambiguous terms, what the Government of Iraq had to do to ensure that it no longer posed a threat to its neighbours or to global security.

For over a decade Iraq has avoided most of those obligations — obligations that were agreed by the Security Council under the mandatory provisions of the United Nations Charter. To this day, the Government of Iraq has failed to comply with 23 out of the 27 obligations contained in nine Security Council resolutions.

People ask, why Iraq? The answer is simple.

Iraq today poses a clear danger to international security because it has sought to acquire weapons of mass destruction and has a well-established record of using them against its neighbours, and, indeed, against its own people.

Iraq's defiance of the international collective will threatens the very basis of our system of collective security. It threatens the global non-proliferation regime that so many, including my country, have worked so hard to build.

If Iraq is allowed to violate both the will of the United Nations and the commitments embodied in key arms- control instruments, it would gravely damage the international system. It would encourage the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to other countries and to other regions. It would encourage some to believe that treaty obligations — such as those taken on by Iraq in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation

of Nuclear Weapons and in the Biological Weapons Convention — can be flouted with impunity.

It is worth focusing for the moment on what it is these Security Council resolutions require the Government of President Saddam Hussein to do.

The Security Council's requirements of Iraq embodied in resolution 687 (1991) were agreed to by Iraq in 1991. For almost 12 years the Government of Iraq has been asked to disarm itself of weapons of mass destruction, to provide a full and frank accounting of its weapons of mass destruction programmes, and to cooperate with United Nations agencies seeking to examine and monitor its weapons of mass destruction facilities. For almost 12 years it has refused to do so.

The international community has very good grounds for pressing Iraq on this issue. Despite continuous Iraqi obstruction, subterfuge and — let us be clear — plain deceit, from 1991 to 1998 the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) was able to discover, document and destroy elements of a massive Iraqi programme to acquire a full suite of weapons of mass destruction: nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery.

But UNSCOM's job was never finished. As UNSCOM reported to the Security Council in early 1999, Iraq's claims that it had destroyed all its chemical and biological weapons could not be verified. As of late 1998, UNSCOM assessed that Iraq had a residual, illegal long-range missile capability, a quantity of chemical munitions, the ability to manufacture more of those — including VX — and a biological weapons manufacturing capability.

Since 1998 the international community has had the benefit neither of inspections nor of ongoing monitoring of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes. For four years our United Nations has tried to resolve this impasse without success — four years in which, as the information provided to the Security Council by Member States such as the United Kingdom, the United States and others highlights, Iraq has used the opportunity presented by the absence of United Nations inspections and monitoring to accelerate its weapons of mass destruction programmes.

Australia is convinced that the Government of Iraq's ambitions to acquire weapons of mass destruction remain undiminished. Australia is convinced that Iraq has made continuing attempts to procure equipment, material and technologies for its weapons of mass destruction programme; that it has been working to increase its chemical and biological weapon capability over the past four years; that it has worked to extend the range of its ballistic missiles; and that it has continued to work on uranium enrichment and weapons design for a nuclear device.

We acknowledge that some Members of the United Nations family take a different view. But few — indeed none, I think — could argue that our concerns about Iraq's ambitions in the area of weapons of mass destruction are not real concerns; that our fears that Iraq has used weapons of mass destruction before and could easily use them again are not unreasonable; that in the aftermath of 11 September and, I say with the greatest sadness, the events of 12 October in Bali, the international community must be scrupulous in addressing threats to international security, or face the disastrous consequences.

There is one way to end the debate, and that is for Iraq to do what it has refused to do for the past four years. The Government of Iraq has the power to resolve this issue peacefully. It must make a full, final and frank declaration of its weapons of mass destruction holdings; give United Nations inspectors full, unconditional and unfettered access; and provide for ongoing monitoring and verification to prove that it has given up weapons of mass destruction once and for all.

But if it lies in the Government of Iraq's gift to end the situation once and for all, the international community also has a responsibility. In recent months we have, on the surface at least, seen something of a change of approach by Iraq on the question of inspections — a change, to be sure, which is yet to be tested. Indeed, Australia congratulates the officials of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the practical steps they have taken towards the resumption of inspections. But this change has come about only because of concerted international pressure and because the Government of Iraq is finally starting to understand the looming consequences of continued defiance.

We must not, as we say in Australia, drop the ball now. The members of the Security Council have a profound responsibility to ensure that the international

community's recent pressure on Iraq does not go to waste. We urge the Council to pass a new and robust resolution which provides the strongest possible basis for unconditional and unfettered inspections of Iraq. For it is only through such inspections that the international community can be completely satisfied that Iraq no longer poses a threat to international security and that this almost-12-year-long saga can be brought to an end.

Australia considers that the United Nations has been patient. It has worked hard to satisfy Iraq's concerns about the previous inspection body — the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) — by designing a new and more streamlined inspection body, UNMOVIC. The Secretary-General has been unstinting in his efforts to encourage Iraq to comply with Security Council resolutions. But we cannot afford to let Iraq's defiance stymie these efforts endlessly.

Australia stands ready to do its part. We have a proud history of contributing to international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Some 110 Australians served with UNSCOM — we were the fourth-largest national contributor. Australians have been trained as inspectors by UNMOVIC, and Australia is ready to participate in the resumption of IAEA weapons inspections. I hope that Australians will again make a substantial contribution to the dismantling of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes.

People ask why we must act on Iraq now. What has and what has not changed? In the wake of 11 September, of course, everything has changed. If one needed any more convincing, one need go only as far as the terrible events in Bali on 12 October — a tragedy which has struck deeply at the heart of my country. If there is one thing that 11 September and 12 October highlight it is that one cannot allow threats to international security to go unaddressed.

It is also true that nothing has changed. For four years we have debated what to do about Iraq, and nothing has been done. Can we afford to allow this situation to continue indefinitely? Can we afford for Iraq's defiance to be rewarded by a slowly fading interest? What message would that send to others in the international community prepared to challenge international norms? That if they hang on long enough, eventually the international community will give up?

The risks presented by inaction are very real. It is the risk that an Iraqi Government, which has shown no compunction about using weapons of mass destruction in the past, will once again be able to threaten its neighbours and the world, but this time with a full suite of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. It is the risk that a regime that has been indiscriminate in its support for terrorist groups will one day hand one of those groups either a chemical, biological or nuclear weapon, or pass on the knowledge to build one.

Some may debate the likelihood of either of those scenarios coming to pass. But can we afford to be wrong? Is what we are asking Iraq to do so unreasonable that we can afford to be wrong?

On 12 October, an as yet unknown number of innocent Australians and other nationals were the victims of an attack of indiscriminate and indescribable savagery. It was a grim demonstration to us that we cannot hide ourselves from threats to international security; that in today's globalized world we act together or face the consequences together.

As a number of world leaders have already noted, unless we step up to the mark to address the threat to the world posed by Iraq's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction today, we will all come to regret our inaction tomorrow.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Australia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Chile. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Valdés (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like first of all to congratulate you, Mr. President, for having convened, in such a timely manner, this open debate of the Security Council on the situation in Iraq. After several weeks of debate in the communications media and selective meetings in the Security Council on this question, it is now appropriate that the Members of the United Nations should have the opportunity to express their views on a matter of such grave concern to the entire international community.

Circumstances require us to be brief and concise. I should like first of all to draw attention to the nature of the question that brings us here. The principal reason for this debate is the repeated and contemptuous disregard for the resolutions of the Council shown by

one of the States Members of the United Nations in a matter that affects international peace and security — the development of weapons of mass destruction. My country has no doubt whatsoever that the existence of such weapons, when they are not subject to inspection by the United Nations, poses a clear challenge to the international community. And it is the international community, acting through the organs that it has established for the maintenance of international peace and security - in particular the Security Council — that is responsible for ensuring the implementation of and compliance with its own resolutions, pursuant to the relevant Articles of the United Nations Charter.

Second, we must determine the nature of the Council's task. This is none other than to achieve the disarmament of Iraq — and it is on that task and no other that Council members should focus in ensuring compliance with Council resolutions. There is no doubt that the success of that endeavour would strengthen the role of the United Nations and the Security Council in the handling of international crises. More importantly, it would ensure peace in a region devastated by other painful conflicts.

We are convinced that our collective international security rests on the commitment of Member States to multilateral cooperation. Disrespect for the United Nations by showing blatant disregard for its decisions will lead not to its irrelevance but to international chaos. Participation in the international order as embodied by the United Nations is not an option that can be chosen or rejected at whim, because there is no alternative order.

That is why we welcome the decision of the President of the United States, George W. Bush, to deal with the crisis within the framework of the United Nations. Likewise, we welcome the letter from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council in which he informed the Council that the Government of Iraq had decided to permit the return of the United Nations weapons inspectors without conditions.

We also welcome as a positive development the fact that, based on the talks held in Vienna by the Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), Mr. Hans Blix, it will be possible to resume the inspection process on the basis of clear and specific agreements. We also appreciate the most recent efforts of Mr. Blix and of the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei, to advance the process of clarification of those agreements through correspondence with the Iraqi authorities.

In order to ensure compliance with the Council resolutions, UNMOVIC must be able to operate without hindrance of any kind. My country attaches particular importance to the need to have an inspection regime guaranteeing that the experts will be able to fully carry out their mission without any obstacle. We believe that in order for UNMOVIC to work effectively, it is necessary for the Council to work immediately on adopting another resolution that will update and define in greater detail the Mission's functions and powers. Once that is done, the inspectors must return to Iraq as soon as possible and carry out their duties without being subjected to any kind of pressure.

As is everyone in the Chamber, we are deeply concerned about the consequences that any deviation in this difficult process might have for the world, for the region and especially for the security of the civilian population of Iraq, which for over a decade has been the victim of an implacable regime and has suffered the great human costs of the sanctions. Experience has shown that it is the people who suffer directly from punitive actions, more than the leaders whose conduct has brought on those measures. For this reason, we oppose the use of force, except as a last resort in the face of grave violations of the inspection regime.

Chile believes that in this case, following the report of the UNMOVIC inspectors, it is the role of the Security Council to meet once again to determine the gravity of any non-compliance and to decide on what necessary measures to take in order to enforce the Council's resolution. There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that it was the Security Council, in exercising its authority, which took the serious decision to employ all the necessary means at its disposal to enforce compliance with the resolutions mandating the disarmament of Iraq.

Chile is a country whose identity is based on respect for domestic law and the international legal order. We therefore hope that this process will continue at all times within the framework of the United Nations and the authority of the Security Council. We have confidence in the capacity of those conducting the

inspections to carry out the substantial task of disarming Iraq. The decisive factor in resolving this crisis lies in the work of UNMOVIC.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): At the outset, let me take this opportunity to thank you, Sir, all members of the Council and those delegates who expressed their sympathy and condolences to the Government of Indonesia for the tragic event that took place in Bali last weekend. My Government is equally shocked and strongly condemns that heinous and barbarous act. A serious investigation is under way. Indonesia is working hard, with the help of several countries, to find the perpetrators and to bring them to justice.

Mr. President, the delegation of Indonesia is pleased to see you chairing the Security Council for the month of October. We are appreciative that under your presidency, the current emergency debate on the situation in Iraq has been convened upon the initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the context of increasing transparency in the Council, we welcome the participation today of non-members, as this debate on Iraq is important not only for its subject matter but also for its timing. Holding the meeting at a time when the Council is considering a possible new resolution enables non-members of the Council to give their input in the policy-making of this body. In this way, we hope that the collective wisdom and the support of the entire membership can be tapped for any decision by the Council on this very important subject. This point is important because it is at the heart of our best hopes concerning the authority of the Council.

The Council should remain engaged in any solution on Iraq. On this question, Indonesia is of the view that diplomatic efforts must be exhausted before taking any other measures. At the moment, the door has been opened to diplomatic activity, and the Security Council should take full advantage of it.

In this connection, we call on the Security Council to continue to seek a peaceful resolution. Indonesia does not believe that anyone prefers conflict to peace. Towards the achievement of a peaceful resolution, therefore, we urge the Council to deploy its considerable influence to persuade all parties that the road to peace — not the route to war — is in the best interest of all. War must be employed only as the very last resort, not as the next item on the agenda. War may tempt, but that does not mean that it will resolve a situation.

As a member of the international community committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes, Indonesia has consistently appealed to the Iraqi leadership to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including those relating to the destruction and renunciation of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, the Government of Indonesia has welcomed Iraq's decision to allow the return of United Nations inspectors to their country without conditions. Since Iraq has indicated its readiness to implement previous Security Council resolutions, agreements, commitments and arrangements, my delegation believes that this critical situation can be resolved peacefully.

It is apparent that Iraq has suffered long enough. All this has been at the expense of the development of the country, its economy, its people and its institutions. It would therefore be unfortunate for Iraq to have to face another war, which would be a further setback to its economy and its people and create a humanitarian crisis even deeper than what Iraq has seen so far. This does not have to be, and the Council has it in its power to prevent it from happening. In our view, now that Iraq has agreed to allow United Nations inspectors back into the country, the door has been re-opened to peace.

There is no doubt about it: Iraq must not only allow in the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), but also see that the return of the inspectors is a new window by means of which it can protect its people. To that end, it must fully comply with all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and work at finding a comprehensive solution that would lead to the lifting of United Nations sanctions.

Indonesia feels that despite what seems to be the prevailing sabre-rattling at the moment, there is a good chance to avoid military action and to win back both regional and global peace in this situation. We call on the Council to seize this opportunity to demonstrate that when necessary, it will go the extra mile to ensure that peace prevails and not have to explain war

afterwards. This issue touches upon the mandate of the Council, and it is in the interest the multilateralism of United Nations that the Council lives up to the best expectations of the membership.

Finally, Indonesia calls attention to the point that the situation in Iraq should not be viewed in isolation. In our view, it is crucial that the international community see the larger picture of the Middle East, with particular reference to the situation in Palestine, as well see the situation in the context of the challenge of terrorism. It is our considered opinion that there is a sense in which these issues, and therefore the response to them, must be seen as related.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Denmark. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country of the European Economic Area, Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

Let me begin by stating that the European Union and the peoples of its member States bear no grudge against the people of Iraq. The European Union respects the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Iraq. In 1990, the Iraqi regime chose to invade its small and defenceless neighbour Kuwait. A broad coalition of countries from all over the world stood up against this aggression.

After the international community had liberated Kuwait, Iraq accepted, inter alia, to give up all its weapons of mass destruction and its long-range ballistic missiles as a condition for lifting the sanctions imposed on Iraq by the Security Council.

For nearly 12 years, the Government of Iraq has failed to cooperate fully on the elimination of its weapons of mass destruction and on the dismantling of its capability for producing such weapons.

In 1991, the Security Council established the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) to implement the disarmament process. The Commission was, however, several times faced with unacceptable conditions imposed by the Iraqi regime, which came to a head in 1998, when further access on the part of the weapons inspectors to Iraqi territory was denied.

In 1999, the Security Council, in its resolution 1284 (1999), established the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) to pick up where UNSCOM had left off. As we all know, UNMOVIC has never been allowed to carry out its mandate in Iraq. As a result, no inspections have taken place in Iraq for more than four years, giving rise to serious concerns on the part of the international community as to the intentions of the Government of Iraq to respect binding obligations under international law.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has worked incessantly to persuade the Iraqi regime to honour its obligations and to let the weapon inspectors from UNMOVIC and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) return to Iraq. Only under strong pressure from the international community has Iraq recently indicated its preparedness to receive the weapons inspectors without any conditions. This newly found position by the Iraqi regime should now be put to the test, and complete disarmament in respect of weapons of mass destruction achieved. UNMOVIC and IAEA should resume inspections as soon as possible on the basis of a reinforced mandate incorporating the practical arrangements set out in the joint letter of UNMOVIC and IAEA to Iraq dated 8 October.

The existing Security Council resolutions, the results of the Vienna talks as contained in the joint letter of the heads of UNMOVIC and IAEA, as well as any new rules the Security Council may deem necessary, should constitute the new governing standard for compliance by the Government of Iraq. This governing standard for inspections should be put to a real test as soon as possible. The Government of Iraq should make no mistake about the fact that non-compliance with this inspection regime would have serious consequences.

The European Union reiterates its demand that Iraq must adhere fully to all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, in particular it must let the United Nations weapons inspectors return to Iraq without any preconditions and fully cooperate with the inspection teams in all aspects, including the granting of immediate and unhindered access to all sites and

facilities in Iraq that the inspectors might wish to investigate. The European Union supports a new Security Council resolution strengthening the rights of inspectors so as to ensure that they can, as effectively as possible, carry out the disarmament required by the relevant resolutions. An effective inspection process in Iraq is a necessary tool for securing the dismantling of all weapons of mass destruction and long-range ballistic missiles, which is our common goal. Iraq must let the inspectors in and fully cooperate in allowing them to carry out their mandate, or be held accountable for its failure to do so.

The European Union reiterates its full support for the efforts of the Security Council and of the Secretary-General in finding a solution to the Iraq question. The European Union emphasizes the vital importance of safeguarding and respecting the crucial role of the Security Council — present and future — in maintaining international peace and security in accordance with the United Nations Charter and in the solution of international conflicts.

We encourage all members of the Security Council to take a speedy decision that maintains strong pressure on Iraq and gathers the widest possible support within the Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Turkey, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): At the outset, Sir, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I wish you every success as you carry out this important responsibility. I would also like to heartily thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of our good neighbour Bulgaria, for the way he conducted the challenging work of the Council over the past month. Last, but not least, I also wish to thank the Permanent Representative of South Africa, who, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), invited the Security Council to discuss this issue during an open debate. As such, this meeting allows all of us, members of the Council and non-members alike, to really see where the feelings and views of the international community really stand today on an issue that is of primary importance to world peace and stability. We do not doubt that the deliberations of the Security Council on the matter of Iraqi compliance with its resolutions, and the exchanges among the permanent members in particular, will be enriched and duly inspired by what they hear in this session from so many speakers.

I also wish to commend the untiring efforts of the Secretary-General to persuade the Iraqi Government of the necessity of full compliance with the Security Council resolutions.

Turkey has aligned itself with the statement just made on behalf of the European Union by my colleague, the Permanent Representative of Denmark. The statement of the European Union is to be seen and understood for what it is: a dispassionate description of a longstanding issue, on the one hand, and on the other, a judicious assessment of the road ahead. I wish to expound on a number of points that are already included in that statement.

First, the Iraqi issue is indeed a long-standing one. Before we lament this critical moment and abhor the dangers it poses, we must remember how we arrived at this unenviable juncture. The Iraqi issue has continued to exist in its various aspects — such as sanctions, disarmament, humanitarian matters like the repatriation of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the return of Kuwaiti property — for no less than 12 years. Throughout those years, the Iraqi people have suffered the debilitating, and at times gruesome, effects of the unintended consequences of measures taken under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

As we longed for stability in the southern part of our country during that time, Turkey received a raw deal. Northern Iraq was turned into a no-man's land, and quickly thereafter into a safe haven for terrorists from where they could conduct their operations into Turkey, gather strength and find rest in order to regroup and start again. We had to bury thousands of souls in our hearts as we determinedly fought this organized evil. At that time world public opinion was still in its infancy and was therefore selfishly equivocal with regard to the ways of combating terrorism.

Turkey's trading routes were also disrupted during those years, which caused widespread unemployment and an awesome loss of revenue. At a time when people everywhere were talking about the so-called benefits of globalization and about a shrinking world, Turkey found itself unable to trade with the southern part of its country.

Obviously, this issue is neither a lurking danger nor a distant event for Turkey. We have been living with the manifold consequences of the deterioration in stability in neighbouring Iraq. Therefore, in our sincere desire for a restoration of normalcy, we have tried for years to explain to our neighbour the dangers inherent in non-compliance with Security Council resolutions. We tried to impress upon the Iraqi leadership that its continued failure to cooperate with the international community in the elimination of its weapons of mass destruction and of its capabilities to produce those weapons would unleash dangers of all sorts.

At long last, after four years, the Iraqi Government last month decided to allow the unconditional return of United Nations weapons inspectors. We very much hope that this signals more than preparedness, and that the international community will choose to test the veracity of the Iraqi position.

It was in that hope that we welcomed the results of the Vienna talks between Iraqi officials and officials of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) concerning practical arrangements regarding inspections. We note that a number of ranking Iraqi officials now assure the international community of Iraq's full cooperation, including the provision of unhindered access to wherever the inspectors deem appropriate to inspect and investigate. However, we also note that the letters sent to the Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC and the Director General of IAEA fell short of total clarity, as they lacked a vocal and unambiguous "yes" to unconditional and unrestricted inspections.

We are passing through the final hours before the Iraqi Government fully understands the gravity of the situation. They should adhere fully to all the relevant resolutions without vainly trying to set forth any preconditions. A new draft resolution should help the Iraqi Government to do precisely that. Not that the previous resolutions are incomplete or legally deficient in any way. Rather, the ongoing quest for a new resolution stems from the actual need to show the world, and large segments of public opinion practically everywhere, that the means available to the Security Council to peacefully dispose of this matter are well and truly exhausted.

In other words, a new draft resolution should help the Iraqi Government to fully understand that the international community is not divided on the straightforward and urgent need for speedy and unhindered inspections to take place in that country, and that it is equally united on the need to hold the Iraqi Government accountable in the event of its failure to keep its word. We hope that the text of such a resolution will display the unanimity of the Security Council, empower the inspectors with an effective mandate and, at the same time, incorporate clear provisions in case of both compliance and non-compliance.

The time for hardening rhetoric has indeed came to an end. It is time to match words with deeds. No one in the Chamber doubts the seriousness of the stage we are passing through. This is not one more critical stage in this long episode; it is a seriously critical stage.

As part of that already problematic geography, as a traditional Power in that part of the world and, more importantly, as people who have special historic and cultural relations and links to the people of Iraq and the region, we have serious concerns regarding any miscalculations that might destabilize the region. After all, no military action has brought a lasting and viable solution in the Middle East. On the contrary, military action has further complicated already difficult problems, perpetuating them for future generations of innocent victims who have, sadly, borne witness to the futility of prolonging conflicts.

We also fear that further destabilization in the Middle East may well trigger the inherent propensity to disrupt the fight against new forms of terrorism. Today the single most important task is to harness the full support of the Security Council and the international community. To repeat, we need a Security Council that speaks the same language and that employs the same pitch inside and outside this Chamber.

Turkey spares no effort to ensure that peace and security prevail in the region, and will continue to do so. We know full well that we have historic responsibilities in securing the reign of hope and dignity in our region. We work towards enlightened ends, and we will never waver when the defence of those goals is called for. Respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of our neighbours, as well as other principles of good-neighbourliness, will continue to guide us.

The destiny of the Iraqi people lies solely in the hands of the Iraqis as a whole. The same should apply to the use they want to make of their natural resources. In that context, the single most important principle is to maintain Iraq's territorial integrity and national unity. Any scenario that questions these basic principles should be discarded. Turkey will deploy every effort to uphold these principles.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Turkey for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of New Zealand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): At the outset, may I express our condolences to the Government of Indonesia on the recent tragic terrorist bombing. It is a tragedy in which New Zealand shares. I would like to express our solidarity with the people and Government of Indonesia at this very tragic time.

New Zealand welcomes this open debate. The issues being considered by the Security Council are of vital importance to us all. They are about how the international community deals with threats to regional and global peace and security, and about the role and credibility of the United Nations.

> We approach this debate with a number of givens. First, Iraq needs to comply with the Security Council's demands for inspection for weapons of mass destruction. Secondly, Security Council resolutions cannot be constantly flouted with impunity. Thirdly, the United Nations Charter, as the pre-eminent international legal instrument, sets out the proper multilateral process for dealing with threats to international peace and security. Fourthly, if Iraq fails to fully comply with the inspection regime, the Council will need to take a clear decision on further action. Let me address each of these in turn.

First, Iraq has consistently ignored Security Council demands for inspection for weapons of mass destruction. It has in the past used chemical weapons against its neighbours and against its own people. It has possessed biological weapons. There are strong grounds to suspect that it has sought the capability to produce nuclear weapons. Iraq has been in breach of international disarmament treaties to which it is a party. Without inspection the Security Council cannot be sure that Iraq does not possess or has no intention to develop these weapons.

When the Government of Iraq signed the Gulf War ceasefire agreement in 1991, it unconditionally accepted the terms of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) requiring the destruction and removal, under international supervision of all of its weapons of mass destruction. Since then, Iraq has consistently violated these commitments, making false declarations of its weapons capabilities and repeatedly obstructing the work of mandated weapons inspectors.

Secondly, Security Council resolutions cannot constantly be flouted with impunity. As a State that is strongly committed to the multilateral system, New Zealand believes that States must comply with Council resolutions. It must be clear to Iraq that there will be serious consequences if it does not do so. The international community will therefore be watching very closely to see how Iraq fulfils its obligations. If Iraq fails to meet them, then we expect the Council to take firm action.

In saying this, New Zealand proceeds from a longstanding position of support for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Thirdly, the United Nations Charter, as the pre-eminent international legal instrument, sets out the proper multilateral process for dealing with threats to international peace and security. As a first step, it is essential that weapons inspectors are immediately readmitted so that the Council can effectively assess the state, nature and extent of Iraq's weapons programme. New Zealand has offered to provide a support group to the inspection team for this purpose.

This requires full cooperation and unrestricted access by Iraq. Should Iraq not comply with its obligations, any decision on further action should come back to the Council for consideration. It is the Security Council that must remain the arbiter of Iraq's compliance, based on the reporting and assessments of the United Nations Monitoring and Verification Commission (UNMOVIC). It is the Council's proper role to make such decisions. Any resolution or resolutions, adopted by the Council should reflect this.

Clarity will be important. The rules governing Iraq's compliance must be clear to the Security Council, Iraq and UNMOVIC. There should be no

room for misunderstanding or reinterpretation. In setting conditions for compliance, it is important that the inspection process remains credible. Equally, the Council must ensure that these conditions are not couched in such a way that Iraq cannot comply. The rules must strengthen the hand of the inspectors, not make their already difficult task more onerous.

We note that there has been a suggestion to give a special role in the inspection regime, to the permanent members of the Security Council. It is true that under the Charter, the permanent members have certain voting privileges and responsibilities, but substantively they are not distinct from other Council Members. Introducing such a distinction here would be neither constructive nor acceptable.

Fourthly, if Iraq fails to comply with the inspection regime, the Council will need to take a clear decision on further action. Iraq cannot fail to be aware of the strengthening of resolve on the Council's part. In the event of Iraqi non-compliance, the use of force is clearly not beyond the Council's contemplation. This would mean a significant loss of lives, including those of innocent Iraqis. There would be a risk of instability within the region and beyond, particularly as the use of force is likely to be perceived by some, however wrongly, as having an ethnic or religious dimension.

There is also the question of what happens in Iraq afterwards. If the Council has a firm and united front, some of these risks may be alleviated because this action will be seen as clearly being taken on behalf of the international community at large. It is therefore important that decisions on future action are taken by a united Council acting as a whole.

Finally, may I make two brief comments; it is regrettable that such momentous decisions have to be contemplated at a time when other Security Council resolutions remain unimplemented in the Middle East, and in the absence of a comprehensive settlement there. It is also regrettable that this issue should face us when the multilateral disarmament environment, and progress towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction more generally, is disappointing. This setting will not make the Council's task in maintaining international peace and security, or the situation of Governments in the region any easier.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Argentina. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We think this is an extremely important and timely debate. The decisions that the Security Council will adopt in the days and weeks ahead will involve issues related to the maintenance of peace, the system of collective security, the credibility and effectiveness of the Council, and the role of the United Nations in the international system during the twenty-first century.

The message of the international community must be clear and unequivocal: the Government of Iraq must fully comply with the obligations imposed by Security Council resolution 687 (1991) adopted under chapter VII of the Charter. This resolution established the terms of the cease-fire and in particular, the obligations of Iraq in the areas of nuclear, chemical and biological disarmament, as well as in the area of ballistic missiles, and created an international inspection regime. Several Council resolutions demanded that Iraq submit a full, final and complete disclosure of all aspects of its programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction and of all holdings of such weapons, their components, production facilities and locations. Iraq has not complied with these resolutions and has engaged in delaying tactics for the past 11 years. This situation is unacceptable.

The letter of the Iraqi Government of 16 September 2002 and the statement of the Permanent Representative of Iraq on that same date, accepting the unconditional return of the inspectors of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), are positive steps. Nevertheless, following the letter of 16 September, other communications have given rise to some misgivings. It is essential that the inspectors enjoy immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to all sites, including the so-called sensitive sites and presidential sites. We support thorough and effective inspections. We have confidence in the professionalism, experience and diplomatic qualities of the Executive Director of UNMOVIC, Hans Blix, and of the Director General of IAEA, Mohamed ElBaradei, in carrying out the inspections.

Taking into account the time elapsed since the departure of UNSCOM inspectors in late 1998 and the experience gained between 1991 and 1998 revealing a pattern of reiterated non-compliance and reluctance by Iraq, we think that the Security Council must adopt new measures strengthening the mandate of the

inspectors and establishing consequences in the case of a new failure to comply.

In our opinion, clear rules must be set to guide the work of the inspectors and it is for the Council itself to determine what constitutes a serious violation of the obligations imposed on Iraq. Iraq must also comply with the other obligations established by resolution 687 (1991), facilitating the return of Kuwaiti property and the repatriation of Kuwaiti and third country nationals.

On 2 August 1990, the Security Council adopted resolution 660 (1990) condemning the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. Argentina participated in the international coalition that, under the authority of Security Council resolution 678 (1990), restored Kuwait's independence and territorial integrity, because Argentina strongly believes that the acquisition of territory by force is an act contrary to imperative rules of international law and can be neither tolerated nor rewarded. That act of aggression by Iraq is at the roots of the obligations imposed on that country in 1991 with respect to disarmament. Eleven years later, those obligations have not been fully complied with. The authority of the United Nations, exercised through the Security Council and the resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter, must be upheld.

It is the duty of the international community to act with energy and decision. We hope that a peaceful resolution is still possible. We urge the Government of Iraq to act in good faith, to give the United Nations inspectors a new opportunity and to give peace a chance that might perhaps be the last for the unfortunate Iraqi people.

The humanitarian situation of the Iraqi people continues to be a cause of deep concern for the entire international community. We hope that the Government of Iraq's full compliance with its obligations will allow for the eventual and gradual lifting of sanctions, bringing relief to the civilian population of Iraq.

We are confident that the use of force can be avoided. Nevertheless, if all negotiating mechanisms are exhausted and, regrettably, force becomes the only option, it must be exercised with the greatest caution and moderation and avoid to the maximum possible extent hurting the civilian population. The use of force is the last resort and, to be legitimate, must be exercised in accordance with the norms of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the authorization of the Security Council.

At the beginning of our speech, we said that the decisions to be adopted by the Security Council in the days and weeks to come will be fundamental for the peace and stability of the region. The outcome must be the strengthening of the United Nations, multilateral diplomacy and the legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness of the Security Council as the custodian of international peace and security appointed by the Member States.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Oman. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me at the outset to extend to you, Sir, and to the other members of the Security Council our thanks and appreciation for your prompt response to the request made by the non-aligned countries for the convening of this meeting in order to consider the question of the return of international inspectors to Iraq.

The Security Council is meeting today to discuss an extremely important issue — the case of Iraq and the resumption by the international inspectors of their mandated task to destroy all weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and to monitor and verify that Iraq is free from such weapons. This debate is of special importance given the threat of military action against Iraq, which would undoubtedly have dire consequences not only for that country, but also for the Middle East and international peace and security, particularly in the light of the grave events taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In welcoming the wise decision of the Iraqi Government on 16 September to allow the international inspectors to return to Iraq, my delegation believes that it came as the result of concerted regional and international efforts to spare Iraq and the entire region from the destruction of war. Undoubtedly, the successful negotiations between Iraq, on the one hand, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), on the other, held in Vienna on 1 October 2002, demonstrated the willingness of the Iraqi Government to remove all

obstacles and to allow the international inspectors to resume their work in that country.

In the light of all this, and in appreciation of the moral and political responsibility of the members of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, we sincerely hope that the Council will shoulder that responsibility by approving the immediate return of UNMOVIC in order to assess the situation on the ground in Iraq and to submit a report to the Security Council on Iraq's cooperation with the international inspectors in the removal of all weapons of mass destruction, if such are found. We believe that any prolongation of the issue would only hinder the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and the compliance by Iraq with its obligations under those resolutions, which, we believe, are quite sufficient at the present time. There is no need to adopt new resolutions that would include an automatic approval of military strikes, a matter that would take us back to the root causes of the events of 1998, when military action took precedence over diplomatic endeavours. That would contradict the purposes of this international Organization.

We welcome once again the positive decision taken by the Iraqi Government to demonstrate its total and unconditional willingness to cooperate with the international inspectors and the IAEA.

Nonetheless, we call on the brotherly Government of Iraq to enable this positive approach to succeed by resuming its cooperation with the Tripartite Commission and by working with the same positive spirit to finally close the humanitarian case relating to Kuwaiti prisoners of war and missing persons, and nationals of third countries, and to return all Kuwaiti property in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We would also call on the Security Council to take the necessary measures to put an end to the suffering of the Iraqi people and to protect its sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity and to work towards closing the Iraq issue in the Council, once Iraq has complied with all its obligations towards the international community.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate the necessity to expeditiously dispatch the international inspectors to undertake their tasks, hoping that Iraq will respect its promises with regard to unconditional cooperation and the removal of all obstacles to the work of UNMOVIC and the IAEA. We would also call upon the Council to explore every peaceful means and diplomatic manoeuvres for the implementation of all relevant resolutions in the interest of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Nigeria, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria) (*spoke in English*): Let me, on behalf of the Nigerian delegation, thank you and other Council members for organizing this public meeting on the situation in Iraq.

Nigeria welcomes the opportunity this open debate affords Member States to express their views on an important issue that has bearing on international peace and security and goes to the core of collective security, on which our Organization is based. This singular action demonstrates the continued determination of the Council to make itself accountable to the membership of the United Nations. We also commend the courage and willingness of the parties to bring their differences to the Security Council for deliberation and eventual determination.

This demonstrates recognition of Article 2, paragraph 3 of the Charter, which stipulates that all Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace, security and justice are not endangered.

The situation in Iraq has been on the agenda of the Security Council since 1990, following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. The United Nations is still involved in the matter with the objective of restoring peace to the region and, in the process, has underscored the inadmissibility of the threat or the use of force in international relations, except when sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council. In this regard, Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 1284 (1999) have set out the obligations of Iraq in the field of disarmament and the full accounting by Iraq of all weapons of mass destruction and other prohibited items.

It is necessary to put on record that the United Nations has made tremendous progress over the years in disarming Iraq and destroying most of its weapons programmes. While the process has not been without

problems, experience has shown that, when the international community has been united and acted collectively in accordance with the Charter and international law, it has been possible to move the process forward in a way that contributes to peace and enhances the legitimacy of our Organization.

Nigeria's position has been all along that Iraq must comply with all its obligations under the relevant United Nations resolutions in order to lift the restrictions that have brought untold suffering to the ordinary people of Iraq. In the meantime, we have always supported and advocated for relief measures, such as the oil-for-food programme, in order to cushion the effects of sanctions on the most vulnerable segments of Iraqi society, especially women and children.

Today, we stand at the threshold of another crucial decision on Iraq and the way we go about addressing the situation will have far-reaching implications for multilateralism and the ability of the United Nations to promote the attainment of world peace, security and development of the entire world and not just a section of it. In this regard, Nigeria believes that the unfinished business of disarmament in Iraq is a source of concern, given the threat it poses to international peace and security. Iraq has not fulfilled all its obligations under the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and its continued breach of those resolutions is a slight to the authority of the Council and undermines the legitimacy of our Organization. Iraq, therefore, has the responsibility to comply fully with all its obligations and must allow the immediate return of weapons inspectors without conditions.

The time to act is now. Iraq must seize this moment to demonstrate to the world its peaceful intentions, its respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law and its determination to rejoin the comity of nations as a peace-loving country.

In the regrettable event of Iraq failing to comply with all relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, in particular its disarmament obligations, it would be legitimate and indeed justifiable for the Security Council, acting in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, to review the situation and take the steps necessary to ensure compliance. The international community has, in the past, demonstrated its ability to act with resolve through the Security Council to deal with any situation that poses a threat to international peace and security. We are confident that it will rise to the occasion and act no less forcefully in this case. In this regard, Nigeria has been following keenly the ongoing consultations within the Council chamber and in the capitals of Council members, with a view to responding appropriately to the situation in Iraq. We believe that the process of consultations, no matter how painful and difficult and indeed frustrating, is the right path to go. We encourage the parties to continue in that process and to avoid the temptation to act alone or without Security Council authorization, as such a move could only do incalculable harm to our Organization and its ability to deal with future threats and situations.

We need to continually remind ourselves that the United Nations was established purely "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". It is therefore incumbent on all Member States to continue to work for the protection of the credibility and integrity of our organization, lest by default we set in motion actions that can weaken the United Nations and deter it from its critical role for international peace and security. Nigeria will continue to deploy its best efforts to insure that the United Nations continues to function effectively as an organization dedicated to peace.

In view of the fact that the debate we are having today is in the context of compliance with United Nations resolutions and international law, we cannot fail to note that there are many other Security Council resolutions, which some Member States, have so far, failed to honour or comply with. We call on the concerned parties to implement all United Nations resolutions and thereby advance the process of peaceful settlement of disputes. The selective enforcement of resolutions is just as unhelpful as non-compliance.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and make his statement.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): My Government warmly welcomes this opportunity to address the situation in Iraq through this open debate.

It is appropriate, in fact crucial, that the Security Council hear the views of the general membership of the United Nations on all matters of international security, especially of peace and war, before reaching its decision.

A long series of resolutions detailing the international and legal obligations of Iraq have been adopted in this room. It was, and remains, the responsibility of the Iraqi Government to fulfil its obligations as determined by the Security Council in the interest of maintaining international peace and security.

(*spoke in English*)

We would not be here today, if the Government of Iraq had fulfilled its obligations to the Council and, by extension, to all the rest of us. Many governments, including the Canadian Government, have already delivered directly to the Government of Iraq the clear message that they must accept the immediate return of inspectors and that they must work with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) openly and unconditionally. This means full cooperation and prompt and unfettered access to all sites that UNMOVIC and IAEA decide to see, including so-called sensitive sites and Presidential sites.

Canada therefore welcomed the decision by the Government of Iraq to accept the return of United Nations inspectors. The unconditional return of weapons inspectors is the essential first step in Iraq's demonstrating its compliance with the will of the international community.

However, as the ceasefire provisions established in Security Council resolution 687 (1991) make clear, the return of weapons inspectors is not the end. It is the means. The end, as has been set out in the decisions of the Council, is the destruction of all Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and long-range missiles and the termination of all Iraqi programmes to develop them.

United Nations inspections are essential to verify this compliance. Regrettably, given the record of the past 11 years, world opinion has learned to be sceptical of the assurances it has been given by the Government of Iraq. We have seen too much evasion, obstruction and misinformation to rely on anything other than the judgements and reports of our own weapons inspectors.

That is why Canada fully supports current efforts to send a new and unambiguous message for Iraq. That message should spell out in clear and unequivocal terms what is required of the Government of Iraq, that is, immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to all sites for weapons inspectors, at the discretion of UNMOVIC and the IAEA themselves.

Equally, it must leave no doubt that Iraq will face serious consequences, should it fail once again fully to comply with decisions of this Security Council, acting on behalf of the entire international community.

Canada's position has always been that these issues should be dealt with within the framework of the United Nations Security Council. The Council has an obligation to respond, clearly, decisively, and with one voice, to the challenge Iraq has posed it.

We remain conscious as well of the plight of the people of Iraq. Our concern for them has only intensified as tension has mounted and as we find ourselves debating yet once again the issues of non-compliance and their consequences. The Iraqi people have paid and are continuing to pay a very heavy price for the past miscalculations and brinksmanship of their leaders.

The Government of Iraq has assured us that it wants to return to the family of nations and to see the lifting of sanctions. If that is the case, the Government of Iraq should have no doubt that the road to acceptance runs through the Security Council. In any case, the Government of Canada expects to see an early and unconditional return of weapons inspectors.

To the Council, we urge complete clarity and unity in the message you send on behalf of us, the international community. Let there be no assertion now or later of contradictory or misleading signals.

The Council should adopt a new and unambiguous resolution that lays out the terms for compliance, against which the Council itself will bear the responsibility of measuring Iraq's response.

In turn, Iraq must serve the best interests of its own people through full cooperation with United Nations inspectors and the full implementation of all Security Council resolutions.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodriguez-Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are deeply gratified, Sir, to see Cameroon, a brotherly country of Africa, at the helm of the Security Council, and we wish you every success.

Cuba, as does almost every other country, opposes further military action against Iraq.

The Non-Aligned Movement has taken a clear stance in favour of peace. The Arab countries oppose military action. The majority of the European and other developed countries do not support it, and the international community is witnessing, with astonishment and feelings of powerlessness, grave accusations being levelled with no proof whatsoever, as well as the seemingly inexorable way in which this "pre-announced war" is being organized.

As a result of important contributions by the Arab League and the Secretary-General, Iraq announced that it was willing to allow the unconditional return of inspectors and expressed its desire to comply with all of the relevant Security Council resolutions, so as to dispel any doubt about the possibility of its continued possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq's decision was welcomed by the international community and by all those who believe that it is possible, and necessary, to avert a conflict that would have unpredictable consequences. Nevertheless, a draft resolution is being promoted in the Security Council that would make war with Iraq unavoidable.

The text includes an automatic mechanism that would trigger the use of force. New procedures are being proposed that are already known to be unworkable, such as having United Nations security forces accompany the inspectors; having representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council participate in the inspection teams, with the same rights accorded other members of the team; the establishment of no-fly/no-drive zones; and an obligation on Iraq to allow inspectors to take out of the country Iraqi nationals they wish to interview, along with their families.

A new resolution is not needed. What is needed is for the inspectors to resume their work in Iraq without any further delay. Recent discussions in Vienna concluded with the achievement of important progress as regards practical arrangements for the resumption of the inspections, including guarantees for unrestricted access, which shows that dialogue and cooperation between the parties is the only avenue to success.

The relevant resolutions must be implemented in good faith by all the parties in order to advance towards a comprehensive settlement of the question of Iraq that will ensure peace and stability for the region and that includes the lifting of the sanctions regime that has caused so much suffering to the Iraqi people.

The sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Iraq, Kuwait and all the countries of the region must be respected.

Cuba is a defender of international law, which we consider to be the only viable guarantee of international peace and security. We believe that the world must be governed by a collective security system based on cooperation that will provide guarantees to us all. Such a system cannot be replaced by the law of the jungle or by doctrines that constitute a violation of the spirit and letter of the Charter of the United Nations and that distort the inherent right of legitimate self-defence, as recognized by Article 51 of the Charter.

The current unsustainable, unjust and deeply inequitable international order cannot be allowed to evolve into an even more primitive one.

Cuba, which has never developed weapons of mass destruction — neither nuclear nor of any other kind — and has the firm determination never to do so, reiterates that general and complete disarmament is the only possible path to peace.

It has been said that the credibility of the United Nations would be at risk if it does not support a military attack against Iraq. On the contrary, if the Security Council does not act to maintain international peace and security, as it is mandated to do, and if instead it supports a war that has not been shown thus far to be the only possible option, the question will arise as to whether the United Nations can survive a situation that will destroy its already damaged credibility.

We all are aware that for several weeks secret meetings have been taking place among some of the permanent members of this body on the question of Iraq, disregarding the rest of the Members of this Organization whose well-known views are being ignored, yet on whose behalf the Council is supposed to act.

It is humiliating for all of us when the non-permanent members of the Security Council, despite their credibility as members elected by the overwhelming majority of Member States, are publicly excluded from the decision-making process.

Cuba hopes that dialogue and negotiation will prevail and that appeals for a war against Iraq will not continue. Cuba hopes that the Security Council will act in accordance with its responsibilities and that it will reassume the role that is incumbent on it in these exceptional circumstances. Were the Council to fail to do so, the damage to the international order, the collective security of States and the United Nations would be irreparable, and the historic responsibility overwhelming.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Cuba for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. We congratulate your sisterly country, and we are fully convinced that you will successfully guide the work of the Council during this very challenging time thanks to your wisdom, your unfailing courtesy and your well-known skills.

The issue before the Council today is a serious matter and an issue that is fraught with danger. This makes it incumbent upon all of us to act with wisdom and objectivity. We were struck by the fact that the Iraqi crisis, whose impact has been felt throughout the world and which has led to extensive debate in the media and in political and intellectual circles, has received very limited consideration in the Council. We would have expected the Council to broaden the scope of its ongoing consultations so as to include non-members, for the sake of justice and transparency. We do not expect there to be heavy locked doors around the Council, reducing discussion and limiting the number of participants in consultations to no more than five. The Council's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security pursuant to the Charter must, therefore, today more than ever, be carried out with full respect for the provisions of the Charter and with clarity and transparency.

There is no better time to translate our aspirations into reality. The legality of measures taken and resolutions adopted by the Council derives from the mandate entrusted to it by Member States. It is the Member States that have entrusted to the Security Council the task of preserving international peace and security on their behalf. Based on this logic, the Council should not — and we certainly do not expect it will — take important decisions without consulting the membership early on in its discussions and, in particular, the States directly involved at a later stage. That twofold level of consultation is indispensable, if the Council's decisions are to be universal in character. That requirement cannot be ignored if the Security Council truly wishes to reflect the will of the international community.

We have all followed the developments in the Iraqi situation, in particular the most recent ones. We have all called for respect for international law and for compliance with Security Council resolutions with regard to the return of international inspectors to Iraq. Iraq made a wise decision in accepting the return of inspectors without restrictions or conditions. We welcomed its decision at the time, believing it to be a necessary step towards resolving the crisis, making it possible to defuse tensions, avoid war and enable the sanctions imposed on Iraq to be lifted, with full respect for the requirements of international law, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and Kuwait and the resolution of outstanding issues, such as the question of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and missing persons. You will no doubt remember, Mr. President, that the Beirut Summit of Arab States, held last March, supported that position and welcomed the reconciliation between Iraq and Kuwait.

We respect international law. It is our resort and our refuge, if it is applied in a neutral and objective manner without selectivity, or double standards. In this connection, I would like to point out that the Security Council proved itself unable to fulfil its responsibilities in preventing Israeli attacks on the occupied Palestinian territories. The Security Council preferred to ignore the fact that Israel has refused to comply with any of the 29 Council resolutions on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Furthermore, Israel has continued to develop weapons of mass destruction and to threaten the peace and security of neighbouring countries and the entire region.

The world does not need another war, in which innocent people, including children, women and elderly people, are killed or left homeless. The peaceful settlement of disputes, in conformity with international law in an equitable and objective manner, is the only option for peace-loving countries. It is the only

guarantor of preserving international peace and security in conformity with the principles of justice and equity.

We must call for restraint. We must give the inspectors the necessary time to discharge their mandate, instead of hastily adopting new measures, which will have a lasting negative effect. We believe that the present situation does not require the Security Council to adopt any new resolutions.

We should all recall that the Charter was adopted for the purpose of saving future generations from the scourge of war. This Council is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. We do not expect the Council, under any circumstances, to be unleashing the dogs of war.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Sudan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Senegal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fall (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): A few days ago, Mr. President, I had the pleasant duty of conveying to you my congratulations, and I would like to do so once again.

What has come to be called the question of Iraq is now one of the most urgent items of international politics on the agenda of chancelleries throughout the world. Excessive media coverage of the debate on Iraq may be one of the explanations for that fact, but some observers would not hesitate to evaluate the growing importance of the Iraqi issue in the light of the tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the re-emergence of violence in the Middle East. I would like to stress that, for its part, Senegal does not want to become embroiled in a controversial debate about the real, apparent or supposed interconnection of these facts.

In participating in this public debate of the Security Council on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, Senegal would like simply to emphasize two major concerns. The first is the overriding obligation of Iraq and its leaders to comply, without conditions or conditionalities, with all the resolutions adopted by the Security Council since 1991.

The second is the urgent necessity for concerted and completely legitimate international action, through the collective action of the Security Council, should Baghdad fail to comply with or deliberately refuse to abide by the Council's injunctions.

Perhaps there is no need to remind the Council that my country, Senegal, is one of the few Member States of sub-Saharan Africa to have taken part in the Desert Shield coalition in 1991. The basic objective of that operation was to put an end to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and to enable that friendly country to regain its full sovereignty over its territory.

The coalition had been expressly set up on the basis and in implementation of a Security Council resolution. Ninety-three Senegalese soldiers lost their lives in a tragic airplane crash while on a pilgrimage several days before their triumphant return home. Their deaths are still mourned by their families and the Senegalese people, with the solidarity of all the members of the Desert Shield coalition.

But it was our fight. It was the fight of the international community against aggression, a fight for the respect of international law and of the Charter. It was the fight of our common Organization, of which Iraq and Kuwait continue to be an integral part.

Eleven years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), the issue of Iraq is still very much on the Council's table. If the drastic sanctions imposed by the Council have still not been lifted, and the Iraqi people, unfortunately, continue to be the main victim, we must acknowledge that exclusive responsibility for this is due to the Government of Iraq's non-compliance with Council resolutions.

Iraq absolutely must respond concretely to the requests of Kuwait, including those concerning the release of the Kuwaiti detainees and the return of all property and archives of the State of Kuwait, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. Accordingly, Baghdad must absolutely submit to the requirements of Council resolution 687 (1991) on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction that might be in its possession and to honour scrupulously the commitments it made with respect to the non-acquisition of arms prohibited by the Council.

Moreover, the expulsion of the inspectors of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) in 1998 could only give rise to doubts, suspicions and exasperation on the part of the international community as to Iraq's real intention to comply with its international disarmament obligations. The community of nations therefore very legitimately continues to have doubts about Iraq concerning its possible possession of weapons of mass destruction, including biological, chemical, bacteriological, radiological or even nuclear weapons. That doubt exists despite repeated assurances by Iraq, despite the multiple organized on-site visits in the last few months, which were highly publicized in the media.

That said and noted, in accepting the return of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and in committing before all the world to offer all the required guarantees on security, movement and access to all agreed sites without conditions or hindrance, Baghdad has taken a significant step in the right direction. Therefore, my delegation welcomes the agreement concluded between the United Nations and Iraq in Vienna some days ago on the details of the return of the inspectors.

In that spirit, Senegal strongly urges Iraq to comply scrupulously with the terms of the agreement concluded by facilitating immediate, unconditional and unlimited access to the suspected sites, including those considered sensitive.

For everything must be done to prevent — rather than simply postpone — a military confrontation of incalculable consequences for the planet and especially for that crucial region of the world that has already suffered from so many conflicts and tragedies, most of whose victims have always been the unarmed civilian population, especially women and children.

Iraq and its leaders must understand that they have nothing to gain from a military confrontation. On the contrary, they have everything to lose, as do we, the peoples of the United Nations. The immense resources which might be swallowed up in a war, the scenario for which would be known in advance, could be used to reconstruct that country of a glorious past, to alleviate the suffering of its people and to construct a society that is more democratic, peaceful and in harmony with its neighbours and the rest of the international community.

My country well understands the security, humanitarian, existential and humanitarian concerns of certain Member States. Those concerns are completely legitimate, especially in the light of the very real tragic events of 11 September 2001 and the persistence of the terrorist menace throughout the world. But only multilateral action, planned collectively in a concerted manner, can really overcome the many threats compromising the future of humanity. That is why Senegal believes that any coercive international action must absolutely be carried out within the framework of the United Nations by means of the Security Council, which alone can give such action indisputable international legitimacy.

Therefore, it is most important for our Council to fully evaluate its historic responsibilities under the Charter of San Francisco, to which all of us without exception have adhered freely and without reservation. There is great risk that the Council and the United Nations along with it will lose credibility if they do not fulfil their statutory obligations on the question of Iraq, as well as on the other questions on its agenda.

In order that the exception does not become the rule and that the norms do not dissolve into a broad regime of exceptions, which many States would request, the same energy the Council is expending on the question of Iraq can and must serve as a precedent in the management of other, equally urgent issues. No Member State can claim to be above the United Nations or wilfully exempt itself from the field of international law. Council resolutions are binding for all, including the States that would defy the United Nations for 35 years, the States that would possess weapons of mass destruction and the States that would occupy militarily foreign territories in violation of United Nations resolutions.

Together, let us be optimistic but reasonable about the future, with the firm hope that multilateralism, the founding principle of our Organization, will triumph, in the enlightened interest of us all.

At a time when many of us are nervously preparing loading weapons, when peoples bled white have exhausted all their tears, we must together continue to find unexplored ways for a diplomatic solution based on the strength of international law and derived from the relevance of Security Council resolutions.

In this regard, Senegal particularly appreciates the recent clarifications by the United States and the United Kingdom on the real objective of Iraq's disarmament, while we support the position of the Europeans, especially France, whose efforts and initiatives towards a solution to the crisis within the United Nations deserve our recognition.

In the search for a peaceful solution to the dispute between Iraq and the United Nations, Senegal supports Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his personal efforts towards a resolution based on the strict respect of the principles inscribed in the Charter of San Francisco and on the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We are aware that the United Nations was created on the ashes of the League of Nations, which was totally indifferent, a partisan of a wait-and-see policy dealing with the fate of small countries. Coming on the heels of the victory of the Allies in the Second World War. The basic mission of the United Nations, far from being war, remains a mission of peace — peace among States, peace among peoples, peace among nations.

Let us refuse to be inadequate to the task, and let us always remain faithful to this cardinal objective, which remains the very raison d'être of our Organization that, first and foremost, wishes to spare future generations from the scourge of war.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Senegal for the kind words addressed to me.

Given the fact that we still have a large number of speakers on our list, and in view of the hour — it is 6.05 p.m. — I propose, with the Council's agreement, to suspend our meeting until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. sharp.

The meeting was suspended at 6.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4625 (Resumption 2)

Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4625th meeting

Thursday, 17 October 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Belinga Eboutou	(Cameroon)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	China	Mr. Jiang Jiang
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mrs. d'Achon
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mrs. Arce de Jeannet
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Letter dated 10 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1132).

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02-64396 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 10.10 a.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): Before calling on the first speaker inscribed on my list, I should like to inform members of the Council that I intend to adhere to the timetable, that is to say, to begin the meeting at 10 a.m. and to suspend it at 1 p.m., to resume at 3 p.m. and suspend at 6 p.m. I count on the cooperation of speakers in order to be able to begin promptly and be able to hear all speakers.

I should also like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Mauritania, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Morocco. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the outset, to extend to you, Mr. President, my delegation's congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We wish you every success in carrying out your task. I would also like to take this opportunity to convey our appreciation to the Ambassador of Bulgaria for his remarkable conduct of the Council's proceedings during the month of September.

The Council is meeting today to consider the issue of Iraq's implementation of international resolutions. This meeting has great importance for both the security and stability of the countries and peoples of the region and for international peace and security. This fact is borne out by the enormous number of delegations that have requested to speak in this debate to express their keen interest with regard to implementing international law and avoiding any steps that could aggravate the situation or threaten peace and stability in the region.

There is no doubt about the need to respect international law and, in particular, the resolutions of the Security Council, which is the body with the primary and important responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This conviction stems from the fact that when the Security Council adopts resolutions it does so on our behalf, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and in line with the provisions of Article 24 of the Charter. It is on that basis that the Council's resolutions enjoy the support of the international community and, hence, the necessary conditions for their implementation.

With regard to Iraq, the resolutions adopted by the Council since 1990 have made clear the obligations that must be met by that nation before the sanctions imposed on it are lifted. Despite difficulties and obstacles during the last 10 years, Iraq has in fact cooperated with the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to implement the provisions of the relevant international resolutions. The good offices of the Secretary-General have made it possible to convince the Iraqi authorities to agree to the return of inspectors. That willingness was reaffirmed in Iraq's letter of 16 September 2002 to the Secretary-General. In that letter, Iraq expressed its readiness to receive inspectors and to discuss the necessary arrangements for the prompt discharge of their tasks. Meetings were subsequently held at Vienna — on 30 September and 1 October 2002 — between Mr. Blix and the Iraqi side, during which the Iraqi side reaffirmed its resolve to cooperate with international inspectors and to allow them to carry out their tasks without conditions or restrictions. The briefing made to the Council by Mr. Blix on 3 October included references to the points agreed between Iraq, the United Nations and the IAEA. It has been agreed that those points would be referred to as the rules of the game. This has given the impression that most of the difficulties that have impeded the work of inspectors will be overcome.

The founding fathers of the Organization established the common defence system provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter. That system was designed in a way that makes resorting to the use of force the very last means available to the Security Council, after all other means have been exhausted. Foremost among those means is the use of economic sanctions to bring a State to implement the Council's resolutions. The

objective of sanctions is therefore to persuade the country concerned of the need to comply with international law and to avoid the use of force. Avoiding the use of force is central to both the role and the responsibilities of the United Nations, especially of the Security Council.

On that basis, and given the fact that Iraq has agreed to accept the prompt and unconditional return of inspectors, the Security Council must now consider whether the resolutions it has thus far adopted are sufficient to enable inspectors to carry out their functions without impediment, or whether it should adopt a new resolution. Whatever the situation may be, our interest in showing respect for international legality and the provisions of the United Nations Charter makes it incumbent upon us to give an opportunity to the inspectors to return to discharge their task and await the report that will be presented by Mr. Blix before taking any other measure.

The peace and security of the States and peoples of the Middle East makes it necessary for all those countries, without exception, and I repeat without exception, to respect international law and to comply with all relevant United Nations resolutions. It must be recalled here, that the resolutions of the Arab Summit in Beirut have consolidated the reconciliation between Iraq and Kuwait. They reaffirmed the need to respect the independence and sovereignty of Iraq, and the need for it to cooperate in order to finally close the file of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and missing persons. They also affirmed the need to avoid any need for military action against Iraq.

In order to ensure the security and stability of the Middle East, the region must be made into a zone free from nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, I must reiterate the consistent support of the Kingdom of Morocco for declaring the Middle East a zone free from those weapons in order to ensure the security and well-being of all peoples of the region.

We cannot ignore or gloss over the humanitarian aspect of the situation in Iraq because those who suffer ultimately are the Iraqi people. We must not forget the tragedy that the brotherly people of Iraq have lived through for the past 10 years. Large numbers of children continue to die as a result of malnutrition and disease, while others are denied their right to education. As for adults, the pitiful financial situation impels them to sell their personal effects, a common sight on the streets of Baghdad, in order to provide for their families and loved ones.

Taking into account this critical situation in which the Iraqi society finds itself, the Security Council must help Iraq overcome this crisis and authorize the resumption of weapons inspections in accordance with United Nations resolutions; the objective is to enable the Iraqi people to return to a normal stable life.

In conclusion, we sincerely hope that the Security Council, as the custodian of international legality and of the credibility of the Organization, will arrive at a common vision and agree to the arrangements for the return of the inspectors to discharge their task. That would give new hope to the peoples of the region and of the whole world, thus avoiding the scourge of another war; for if it were to take place, it would have dire consequences on the stability of a large number of States.

The President: I thank the representative of Morocco for his kind word addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): We are grateful to the Non-Aligned Movement for its initiative in requesting this open debate, which could have been convened even earlier at the initiative of the members of the Security Council themselves. Developments in the past few months have raised very serious concerns, as the international community seems to be drawn into the dreadful logic of war.

This is a critical matter that concerns the Membership of the United Nations as a whole. International peace and security are clearly at stake, as is the very credibility of our Organization, its principles and methods of work. Not only should the Security Council benefit from the views of non-Member States on the most appropriate steps to be taken, but also the wider membership of the United Nations needs to be appraised on the difficult political choices which are being considered by the Council.

In moments like this, our collective choices must be guided by the need to ensure unconditional respect for the norms of international law embodied in the United Nations Charter and for the mandatory

decisions adopted by the Security Council, as well as by the possibility of resorting to the instruments provided in the Charter in order to ensure the maintenance of peace and security; the use of military force must only be considered as a measure of last resort.

As Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Lafer stated at the Assembly's second meeting, at the outset of the general debate of the current session:

> "The use of force at the international level is admissible only once all diplomatic alternatives have been exhausted. Force must be exercised only in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and in a manner consistent with the determinations of the Security Council. Otherwise, the credibility of the Organization will be undermined in a way that will not only be illegitimate, but that also gives rise to situations of precarious and short-lived stability. In the specific case of Iraq, Brazil believes that it is incumbent on the Security Council to determine the necessary measures to ensure full compliance with the relevant resolutions. The Security Council's exercise of its responsibilities is the way to reduce tensions and to avoid risking the unpredictable consequences resulting from wider instability."

There must be no mistake whatsoever on what the entire international community expects from Iraqi authorities. The fact that Iraq has blatantly refused to cooperate with the United Nations in the implementation of Security Council resolutions is a matter of great concern, and not without consequences for the maintenance of international peace and security. Iraq must abide strictly and unconditionally by its obligations under those resolutions. The international community requires full and verifiable assurances that Iraq has completely demobilized its programmes of weapons of mass destruction and that it is not in a position to resume them.

The Security Council must act in accordance with the international community's desire that inspections in Iraq be resumed as soon as possible, with a view to ensure the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. To that end, full compliance and cooperation on the part of the Iraqi authorities is absolutely necessary. Inspections must be carried out independently by the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency with unrestricted cooperation on the part of Iraq.

The Council should also be encouraged to define positive incentives for full compliance that would lead to the alleviation and gradual lifting of the sanctions regime. If and when they are needed, further measures of enforcement should be considered by the Security Council in the light of an evaluation of the findings of the inspections.

We trust that this debate will give the Security Council a clearer picture of the views of the Member States on this matter of great concern to us all.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Switzerland. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, and the other members of the Security Council for the opportunity to speak on the issue of Iraq.

Switzerland stands firmly against all forms of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, whether this concerns the production of or efforts to produce such weapons. These weapons first and foremost present a threat to civilian populations. Switzerland also shares the concern that such weapons could fall into the hands of international terrorist networks. It will continue working to promote comprehensive disarmament that is verifiable and well-balanced at the regional and global levels.

Switzerland should like to see the Iraqi Government respect the obligations incumbent upon it in accordance with the Security Council resolutions regarding inspections. It notes that the policy of armament pursued by that Government in recent years gives rise to serious suspicions. It believes that the only way to allay these suspicions is for the latter to accept unconditionally the presence and the inspections of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) on its territory.

Switzerland supports without reservation the efforts of the Security Council, of the Secretary-General and of the head of UNMOVIC. It has communicated to the head of UNMOVIC that it would

be willing to play an active part in the UNMOVIC mission should its assistance be required. It is of the opinion that all so-called presidential sites must also be listed and made accessible to the inspectors without restriction. Finally, it considers that the inspections must be thorough and lead to the effective elimination of any illegal weapons that may be found.

Switzerland believes that all peaceful means should be exhausted in order to achieve these aims. The possible use of force should not be considered without account being taken of all the potential short- and long-term consequences at the political, security, humanitarian and economic levels. Switzerland is particularly apprehensive about the risks facing the civilian population. It is equally concerned about the impact that an armed conflict could have on regional stability.

Switzerland believes in this context that the primary objective to be pursued by the international community is the elimination of any illegal weapons that may be discovered in Iraq. It also welcomed the willingness shown by President Bush on 12 September 2002 to seek a solution to the current crisis in the framework of the Security Council. It also welcomed both the Iraqi Government's announcement of its decision to conform to the pressing demands of the international community by accepting the return of disarmament inspectors, as well as the constructive results of the talks in Vienna.

Switzerland considers that all procedures provided for in the Charter of the United Nations must be respected and that recourse to the Security Council is indispensable when the use of force is envisaged. In particular, it points out the risk of a precipitous interpretation of the notion of legitimate defence from a preventive perspective that extends beyond the scope provided for in the Charter. As such, it favours a two-stage approach that would permit the Council to assure itself, on the basis of the report of the inspectors, that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations and, in the event that this should not be the case, to take all necessary measures with full knowledge of the facts.

Switzerland attaches great importance to respect for Security Council resolutions. While recognizing the specific nature of each conflict, it will continue to strive to ensure the implementation of all Security Council resolutions in the name of the credibility and effectiveness of international law.

There is undeniably a need to act, and to act with determination, in order to ensure the implementation of United Nations resolutions, but action must be taken jointly within the framework of the United Nations. Only the United Nations can confer international legitimacy on an action against Iraq.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Switzerland for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): We felicitate you, Sir, upon your assumption of the Council presidency. We express our confidence in your ability to bring our deliberations to fruition. We also commend Ambassador Tafrov's leadership last month.

Bangladesh maintains a strong preference for the peaceful settlement of disputes. We have consistently made this point in the past, including on the floor of this Council. As always, Bangladesh believes in diplomatic and political solutions to international disputes. These must be achieved through constructive discussions.

While we acknowledge the need for the enforcement of Security Council resolutions, such enforcement actions should be based on the norms and mores of international law and backed by the United Nations. The objective of any enforcement action should indeed be the need to enhance security, peace and stability. On the specific issue at hand, we welcome Iraq's decision to allow the return of weapons inspectors. The inspectors should have total and unfettered access in the course of the discharge of their assigned responsibilities. No impediment must be placed on the work of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission. Furthermore, Iraq must comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions on this issue.

However, in the ultimate analysis, every possible effort should be made to avert war. Wars cause death and destruction. They disrupt economies and they exacerbate human suffering. These views, as this debate amply demonstrates, are evidently shared by a preponderant majority of the membership of the United Nations. They must be heard, listened to and heeded.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): Mr. President, my delegation joins others in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria, for his stewardship of the Council last month.

We thank you, Mr. President, and members of the Council for convening this very important open meeting on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, in response to the request of the Permanent Representative of South Africa, in his capacity as Chairman of the Non-aligned Movement. My delegation associates itself fully with the statement that he made yesterday, outlining the position of the Movement on this issue. This meeting is most timely because the attention of the entire international community is focused on the impending decision of the Council.

Malaysia is among those who had called for this meeting so as to enable the larger membership of the Organisation to express their views before the Council takes action on this issue. This is because the decision that the Council is about to take on Iraq is of crucial importance, not only to Iraq but also to the region and the entire international community. We think it is appropriate that, on an issue as important as this, the views of all Member States of the United Nations be heard. We thank the Council for the courtesy of listening to the non-members first.

The issue before the Council relates to the return of United Nations arms inspectors to Iraq, after an absence of four years, to continue with the Council-mandated task of disarming Iraq of the remaining weapons of mass destruction that it is alleged to have in its possession. That task has now been entrusted to the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), established by Security Council resolution 1284 (1999), under the leadership of a disarmament expert of vast experience, Mr. Hans Blix.

Under the terms of that resolution, the Council entrusted Mr. Blix and UNMOVIC to carry out its mandate, guided by the principles of professionalism, independence, rigour and transparency, to ensure that an effective inspection regime could be put in place. The independent or United Nations character of UNMOVIC is essential and must be preserved if it is to carry out its work with credibility. This is particularly important, given the well-known problems besetting its predecessor, the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) which made that fateful decision to pull out of Iraq just before the bombing raids of December 1998, thereby abruptly terminating its painstaking but otherwise useful work.

Mr. Blix has already had initial meetings with the Iraqi side to work out the modalities of the return of the arms inspectors under the new name and mandate. He awaits the green light from the Council before proceeding to Iraq. With Iraq's acceptance of the unconditional return of United Nations arms inspectors, Mr. Blix is legally bound, under Security Council resolution 1284 (1999), to proceed with the fulfilment of his mandate.

Malaysia believes that with the assured cooperation of the Government of Iraq, UNMOVIC would be able fulfil its mandate and should proceed accordingly, without the need for another Council resolution. Mr. Blix, as we understand it, was ready to proceed but became uncertain and confused as to the purpose of the exercise, with the beating of the drums of war coming to a crescendo. He now seeks guidance from the Council, which is understandable if UNMOVIC is to do its job well and has the blessing of the Council.

However, any new instruction, if absolutely necessary, must merely be to reinforce the thrust of resolution 1284 (1999). Any departure from that resolution — which would include, as widely speculated, the threat of use of force, among other new elements, some of which are unprecedented — would only, and unnecessarily, complicate the work of UNMOVIC. UNMOVIC must be given a chance to complete the work of UNSCOM, and Iraq must be given a chance to demonstrate full compliance and cooperation with the United Nations and the international community, without threats of the use of force. We believe that Iraq has heard and will heed the clear and unambiguous message of the international

community on the issue of its commitments regarding its obligations.

Therefore, the issue before the Council should not be one of authorizing use of force against Iraq on the presumption of Iraqi non-compliance with resolution 1284 (1999), but one of allowing UNMOVIC to commence its work in Iraq as expeditiously as possible. The focus in the Council should be on promoting United Nations diplomacy to resolve the problem through effective inspections and weapons destruction, not on legitimizing war against Iraq to effect "regime change". Removing the head of State or Government of a sovereign State is illegal and against the Charter, and it must never be a project that has the endorsement of this Council. The provisions of the Charter on this matter are very clear and unambiguous, as has been underscored by many speakers in this debate.

At the same time, the disarmament efforts must be a part of a clear sanctions-lifting plan, so that the debilitating humanitarian crisis in Iraq can be brought to a swift end. The success of this current exercise requires the fullest cooperation of the Government of Iraq in every respect. It is time to bring to a close a sad chapter in the history of the region and to forge a new relationship among the regional States, one based on reconciliation, trust and confidence with one another, and a shared common heritage.

This, however, could only come about with Iraq's full cooperation in other areas, under the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including an immediate accounting for and return of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and missing third-country nationals, as well as national archives and other properties illegally taken from Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion of that country. Only these actions on the part of Iraq would ensure the return of normalcy in the relations between Iraq and Kuwait. We would therefore urge Iraq not to lose this window of opportunity and to do what is right, in the interest of peace and tranquillity of its people, the region and the world.

My delegation welcomes the fact that the issue of Iraq is now being dealt with by the Security Council, where it rightfully belongs. The matter must be dealt with by the full Council, involving all of its members at every stage of the deliberations. It must be resolved through the Council's own mechanisms and processes, based on established principles and norms of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. It is up to Council members to ensure and preserve the integrity of its decision-making process and to do their utmost to resolve the problem without recourse to military action. The beating of war drums and talk of "regime change" are, therefore, completely out of place and unwarranted. They detract from the business at hand, which is the dispatch of UNMOVIC inspectors to Iraq, and complicate the situation.

It is clear that the overwhelming majority of the international community does not wish to see or support military action against Iraq. This is not surprising, as no one wants to see the prolongation of the utter misery of the Iraqi people after almost twelve years of the most debilitating sanctions. The innocent people of Iraq will be among the first and most numerous casualties in any use of force against Iraq. For their sake, war must be avoided. Diplomacy must be given every chance to work. Its success far outweighs, and is more enduring than, anything that military action could bring to bear on the situation.

This is the message that the Secretary-General himself has repeated often enough, both in the context of the question of Iraq and other conflict situations. In his opening address to this session of the General Assembly on 12 September 2002, the Secretary-General staunchly stood up for diplomacy and multilateralism. The Council can do no less as multilateralism, which entails United Nations diplomacy, is the raison-d'être of the United Nations. He said it most poignantly at the second meeting of the General Assembly's current session when, referring to the sanctity of the rule of law, he declared:

> "... every government that is committed to the rule of law at home, must be committed also to the rule of law abroad. All States have a clear interest, as well as a clear responsibility, to uphold international law and maintain international order".

The alternative to diplomacy and the multilateral process is recourse to the use of armed force, with all its unintended consequences to peace, security, including human security and development. Unintended consequences could affect, as well, international efforts to combat international terrorism, which will surely be further complicated and may well unravel in its wake.

Surely, with the ushering in of the new century and millennium, and the high hopes and expectations contained in the Millennium Declaration, the Council will not wish to squander the gains garnered over so many years of careful, painstaking and productive diplomacy.

All Members of the Organization are custodians of the Charter, but especially so the Members serving on the Security Council, both permanent and non-permanent. They must ensure that the Charter is upheld and protected, not undermined or set aside. There must be consistency and even-handedness in its actions and decisions and no double standards. What is required of Iraq, with respect to compliance with Council resolutions, must also be required of others, particularly Israel, which has ignored many of them with impunity.

In dealing with this and other issues of peace and security, the Council has a grave responsibility to ensure that the international system, based on the corpus of international laws and norms, will be preserved and strengthened. Members of the Council will have to ensure and satisfy themselves that their action in the Council will serve the larger interests of the international community, not just their own narrow national interests. At the end of the day, the Council will be judged as to whether its decision upholds international law and international legitimacy, strengthens the United Nations and the multilateral process, promotes peace and security, or the opposite. It will be judged as to whether by its decision the Council chooses the path of constructive diplomacy or that of destructive war, with all its implications to regional and international peace and security.

This is, indeed, a heavy responsibility that each member of the Council must bear on behalf of the international community in whose name, and hopefully, in whose interests, the Security Council acts. The responsibility is particularly awesome for the permanent members who, by virtue of the special power vested in them, will determine, more than others, the final outcome of this issue. We trust they, and other Council members, will do what is right.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Malaysia for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Lebanon. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Diab (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, it gives me pleasure to express our sincere thanks for your prompt response to the request of the delegation of South Africa, in its capacity as chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, to hold this public meeting to discuss the question of Iraq and related developments.

Allow me, Sir, to take this opportunity to express Lebanon's condolences to the countries whose nationals perished in the tragedy that took place in Indonesia as a result of the terrorist act in Bali.

Resort to the United Nations and implementation of its resolutions, in particular those of the Security Council concerning any question, ensures the peaceful settlement of such questions and prevents States from resorting to unilateral military action that could result in tragedy and danger that might not be confined to the geographical location of the problem. This fact applies to Iraq.

The Beirut Summit of the League of Arab States reaffirmed the unanimous view of the Arab leaders that the solution to the problem of Iraq can only be achieved through dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations, without exposing it to a war that would increase the suffering of its people.

Using the logic of dialogue during the Beirut Summit, the Republic of Iraq undertook steps to respect the independence, sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the State of Kuwait, and to avert anything that might lead to a repetition of the actions of 1990. Those undertakings were warmly welcomed by the Arab leaders and also constitute a preliminary step towards Iraq's cooperation in reaching a prompt and final solution to the question of the Kuwaiti prisoners-of-war and the return of Kuwaiti property in accordance with relevant international resolutions.

Within that atmosphere of cooperation, the Arab leaders at the Beirut Summit adopted a number of positions that support Iraq and that called for the following: first, respect for the independence, sovereignty, security, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. Secondly, the resumption of dialogue between the United Nations and Iraq, which began in a constructive and positive atmosphere, in order to complete

implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. Thirdly, they called for the lifting of the sanctions imposed on Iraq and an end to the suffering of its brotherly people in a manner that ensures security and stability in the region.

In addition, the Arab leaders expressed their total rejection of an attack on Iraq and noted that a threat to the peace and security of any Arab State is a threat to the national security of all Arab States.

Since the Beirut Summit, Iraq adopted a number of additional constructive steps that proved its commitment to addressing the relevant Security Council resolutions. In the 16 September 2002 letter, from the Foreign Minister of Iraq to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Iraq responded to the appeals of the United Nations Secretary-General and those of the Member States. The letter contained Iraq's decision to allow the unconditional and unrestricted return of United Nations weapons inspectors. It constituted a first step towards a comprehension solution that would ensure implementation of the other provisions of the Security Council resolutions.

Once again, the logic of dialogue proved that it alone can ensure implementation of the Security Council resolutions on Iraq. The consultations held between Iraq, Mr. Hans Blix and Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei led to the conclusion of an agreement with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna on 1 October 2002, on the practical arrangements for the return of the United Nations weapons inspectors, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The urgent task now is the return of United Nations weapons inspectors to ascertain that Iraq no longer possesses weapons of mass destruction. Mr. Hans Blix expressed the readiness of his team to return to Iraq on the basis of existing resolutions. Therefore, the adoption of any new resolution would create complications that have no legal justification.

The transformation of the Middle East region into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, in particular of nuclear weapons, and the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, especially those relating to the conflict in the Middle East, without any distinctions between States, is an essential precondition for the establishment of lasting peace and security in the region.

However, what we see in reality is that Israel has consistently defied internationally binding resolutions. It has ignored Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which calls for the establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It has refused to implement resolution 487 (1981), which was adopted following the Israeli act of aggression against Iraq in 1981. That resolution called upon Israel to place its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Israel has continued to stockpile weapons of mass destruction in its arsenal, particularly nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, without any international deterrent. Israel has also ignored, indeed even challenged, the 29 Security Council resolutions adopted on the question of Palestine, the latest of which was resolution 1435 (2002), which demanded that Israel withdraw from the recently reoccupied Palestinian territories and towns.

Israel has resorted to violence, aggression and the perpetration of crimes against humanity in order to implement its expansionist and settlement policies. It continues to reject all the efforts made for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and peaceful settlement of the Middle East question, the latest of which was the Arab peace initiative, which was endorsed by the Beirut Summit. Israel responded to that initiative, which enjoyed unanimous Arab and international support and was welcomed by the Security Council in its resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1435 (2002), by reoccupying the West Bank, killing people and destroying property.

Despite all of this, the Security Council has thus far taken no steps to ensure Israel's implementation of its resolutions; thus it seems that Israel has impunity in this respect. This situation can only reinforce the view of the Governments and the peoples of the region that double standards do exist in international relations. The application of international law is limited to Iraq while Israel is allowed to remain above the law.

This view that a double standard exists in the implementation of Security Council resolutions has also been expressed by anti-war demonstrators in Europe and in America. An article entitled "Double

Standards", which appeared in the latest issue of *The Economist*, on 12 October 2002, stated:

(*spoke in English*)

> "It is no longer being asked by Arabs alone. 'No war against Iraq, free Palestine' has become the slogan of anti-war demonstrators in Europe and America. The two conflicts have become entwined in the public mind in a way that the West's politicians cannot ignore. When he sought last week to talk a sceptical Labour Party into supporting action against Iraq, Tony Blair, Britain's Prime Minister, got his biggest cheer for the bit of his speech that said that United Nations resolutions should apply in Palestine as much as in Iraq."

(*spoke in Arabic*)

This is a further reaffirmation of the need for the Security Council to adopt a single standard in dealing with its own resolutions in order to ensure that justice prevails.

In conclusion, in its capacity as Chairman of the Arab Summit, Lebanon hopes that Iraq's positive response to the international will and its readiness to accept the return of international inspectors will help to put an end to the suffering of its people and lead to a comprehensive solution that would lead to the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and most importantly to the lifting of the sanctions on Iraq. Those sanctions have killed 1.8 million Iraqis thus far, most of them women, children and the elderly.

Lebanon also looks forward to the creation in the Middle East of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and to an end to the threats to use force against Iraq, and to respect its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Lebanon for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nambiar (India): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to congratulate you for your initiative in holding this open meeting on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. We have just concluded a lengthy debate in the General Assembly on the issue of the Security Council's report and on its reform and restructuring. One of the issues raised by a large number of speakers at that debate pertained to the desire to see greater transparency in the functioning of the Council and in the relationship between the Council and the general membership of the Organization. The decision to hold an open meeting to discuss an issue of considerable import to the larger membership of this Organization addresses this concern directly and is therefore both opportune and timely.

India has a vital interest and high stakes in the peace and prosperity of the Gulf region. Our relations with this region have developed as a result of centuries of deep historical, cultural, religious and economic contacts. Today, approximately 4 million Indians reside in the Gulf region. In Iraq itself, we had substantial trade interests and projects which were affected after 1991. Under the "oil-for-food" programme, India is a significant exporter. Developments in the region thus affect India.

India had welcomed the remarks made by the President of the United States during the debate in the General Assembly on 12 September 2002 indicating that the United States would work with the Security Council for the necessary resolutions on Iraq. We had also welcomed the resumption of diplomatic efforts under the auspices of the United Nations to try to end the impasse on inspections.

During the debate in the General Assembly, many leaders emphasized that adherence to the multilateral system is an indispensable imperative for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Secretary-General, too, in his address to the General Assembly, had stressed this point and had conveyed that, while Article 51 of the Charter provides States the right of self-defence, if attacked, when it came to addressing the broader threats to international peace and security, there was no substitute for the unique legitimacy provided by the United Nations. In contemplating the use of force, the question of legitimacy and the international rule of law are important. Twelve years ago, faced with a case of aggression, the Member States showed their willingness to authorize action under the authority of the Security Council. These were reflected in Security Council resolutions 686 (1991) and 687 (1991) of 1991. Without such authority, any support for a campaign would not be forthcoming.

India recognizes the desire of the international community to see full compliance by Iraq with all relevant United Nations resolutions, including those relating to the repatriation of Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and to the return of all Kuwaiti property. Such a desire cannot, however, justify any unilateral action against Iraq without the agreement of the United Nations. We are of the view that given the current configuration of circumstances, any undermining of the territorial integrity of Iraq could have unforeseen and destructive geopolitical implications that could extend even beyond the region.

While saying that, we recognize that it has been four years since the most recent United Nations inspections in Iraq took place. The need for an update to tighten the inspection regime and sort out "loose ends" was recently elucidated by the Executive Director of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, Mr. Hans Blix. If the Security Council were to see the need to review the situation and lay down fresh guidelines for the weapons inspectors to go into Iraq, India would be supportive of that process. However, before deciding on a new mandate it would be important for the Council to reflect on the objective of such an exercise. The purpose of any such action should be to achieve disarmament in Iraq as laid down in the relevant resolutions.

In ensuring this objective, the proposals concerning the inspection regime have to be commensurate with the task at hand — that is, inspections must be designed to enforce the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Council. Some of the proposals being advanced pertaining to the role and presence of particular Council members in inspections, extra-territorial interviews of Iraqi nationals and the use of United Nations armed guards to accompany inspectors would seem unprecedented and could attract adverse public attention internationally. We believe that the conditions attached to any new resolutions, and the modalities of their implementation, should not be such as to make them unworkable or effectively to invite their rejection.

Some speakers in the General Assembly debate on the Security Council have made reference to the exclusivity claimed by the five permanent members in the context of recent deliberations and contemplated actions with respect to Iraq. Our view is that such a narrow base for decision-making can only detract from the unity and cohesion that must be generated and sustained on an issue so grave in nature and of such magnitude.

India believes that while there may be a rationale for a tightened inspections regime, there is an equally compelling case for the creation of an enabling environment for compliance with the relevant resolutions. Such a step has been envisaged in Security Council resolutions themselves — and I refer in this context to section D of resolution 1284 (1999). We believe that sanctions against Iraq should be lifted in tandem with full and effective compliance by Iraq with the relevant Security Council resolutions. We also believe that sanctions should not have an adverse humanitarian impact on the lives of ordinary Iraqi citizens.

In conclusion, I wish to join a large number of other delegations that have expressed themselves on this subject, and to reiterate that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a State are inviolable. Any action to limit these attributes can be taken only under the express provisions enshrined in Chapter VII of the Charter.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that all possible alternatives that can help avoid recourse to military action be actively explored under United Nations auspices. Every effort must be made to ensure that peace and stability are maintained in the region, for what we do could well represent a defining moment in the way relations among States are ordered. There should be no precipitate action that adversely affects the interests of the countries of the region or of countries which have vital stakes in the region. The action of the Council must not only possess legitimacy; it must also be seen to possess legitimacy. For our part, we believe that the urgent task as a first step is to facilitate the return of inspectors to Iraq. The Council should fashion its approach with this basic task in mind.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Viet Nam. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for responding so quickly to the request by South Africa, in its capacity as the country currently chairing the Non-Aligned

Movement, to convene this important debate on an issue of great concern to all Members of the United Nations. I also believe that by doing so, you are keeping the members of the Council more attuned to the groundswell of opinion of non-Council members, which in turn may help in the consultations of the Council members on the much-discussed draft resolution.

The issue of the looming confrontation with regard to Iraq is being inflated to such an extent that it could erupt any day now with a military attack against that country. Iraq is being depicted as an outcast that has developed and stockpiled weapons of mass destruction and has relations with the hated Al Qaeda. But is there any concrete evidence to prove that beyond any reasonable doubt?

I believe that in this case the devil is not so black as it is being painted. While that second allegation seems to be groundless — as a recent Central Intelligence Agency report found — the first is simply based on the argument that if Iraq refuses to go along with a United Nations resolution, it must have something to hide. Only experts can say whether or not Iraq has developed and stockpiled weapons of mass destruction. Now that the Iraqi Government has accepted, without any conditions, the return of international weapons inspectors to Iraq, a hurdle has been removed. So let the inspectors come back and do what they are mandated to do; pre-emption and prejudgement will not help their task. A political, not a military, approach is the only way to resolve the deadlock. We are convinced that diplomatic efforts towards this end will bring more credit to the Council.

The gist of the question is this: if the political will is for war, peace will not have a chance; but if it is for peace, then we Member States should stick to the Charter of the United Nations, giving peace at least the last chance. Article 51 and Article 2 of the Charter are very clear about this issue. I am not going to waste the Council's time by quoting from them here. But in this connection, my delegation fully agrees with the statement made by the Secretary-General in the 2nd meeting of the General Assembly, on 12 September 2002, when he said:

> "Any State, if attacked, retains the inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter. But beyond that, when States decide to use force to deal with broader threats to international peace and security, there is no substitute for the unique legitimacy provided by the United Nations."

In this connection, my delegation wishes to make it clear that any attempt to change the political system of a sovereign State by sheer force of arms is unacceptable, as it constitutes a blatant violation of the Charter and of international law, and creates a very dangerous precedent in international relations. I believe that nobody wants to turn this world into "Apocalypse Now".

In recent history we have witnessed the full-scale escalation of a war due to merely a decision under a similar circumstances. We therefore call on the international community to do whatever it can to avoid any flexing of military muscle, which will surely endanger peace and stability in this region and the world over.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Djibouti. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): At the outset, I would like to state how pleased I am to see you, Mr. President, presiding over the affairs of the Council for this month.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday by Ambassador Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo of South Africa on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation of the Council's positive response in holding this emergency meeting on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

Given the conflicting objectives being pursued both within and outside the United Nations, the uncertainties clouding the current international political climate are daunting. We are at a crossroads of history. As many who have spoken before me have already indicated, this debate has one major objective: to enable the more than 175 nations at the United Nations that are not members of the Security Council to be heard and to have their views carefully heeded.

The heavy burden of responsibility placed on the Council cannot be underestimated. This is so because it seems — we are all in agreement — that the Security Council has the mandate and sole responsibility to decide upon Iraq's disarmament regime, the return of inspectors, the conduct of inspections and ensuring

Iraq's full compliance with all relevant resolutions. Further, in the event of any non-compliance, refusal or obstruction by Iraq, the Security Council alone has the mandate to chart the next course of action. We believe that through patient and thoughtful negotiations, however tough, there will emerge a unified, internationally acceptable policy toward Iraq. We also believe that no one wants a war and that everyone recognizes that if a military action were authorized by the Council, it would be only as a justifiable last resort.

We always need to be reminded that if the justification for the use of force is the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, then the logical solution lies in the return of inspectors to Iraq to carry out comprehensive and unrestricted inspections. If this process is given a chance, Mr. Hans Blix and his colleagues would soon embark upon their duties and the Council could expect a report in due course on the level of cooperation and on the degree of compliance or non-compliance by Iraq. It is therefore up to Iraq to live up to the promise it has reiterated many times in the last few weeks that they assert their complete readiness to receive the inspectors and agree to resolve all issues that may block the road to joint cooperation.

The Council is, indeed, confronted with an unprecedented situation requiring its immediate consideration. The Council must be satisfied with the accuracy and impartiality of information it receives, and which is expected to form the basis of crucial decisions. More than ever before, the integrity and credibility of the Council is at stake, for the international community believes that any decision or action the Council finally embraces will be taken with great care and conviction. The Council's choice must be made with moderation, judiciousness and utmost fairness. As the primary custodian for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council understands only too well that the challenge before it today is one affecting us all. Accordingly, the international community places its faith in the hands, heads and hearts of the members of the Council.

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait is an old story which never seems to go away, while the people of Iraq continue to experience abject poverty and deplorable living conditions. It is unfortunate and unacceptable for the fate of a whole nation to be ensnared by an international political football that continues to have dire humanitarian consequences. While there has obviously been an interruption of inspections since 1998, we continue to believe that until that time, significant progress had been achieved in disarming Iraq. The current state of negotiations between the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and Iraq offers a glimpse of hope which needs to be seized. Let us not squander this opportunity to achieve the core objectives contained in Security Council resolutions 686 (1991), 687 (1991) and 1284 (1999), while ensuring full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Iraq.

Iraq also needs to ensure compliance in good faith and cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross for finding a lasting resolution of the Kuwaiti claims, particularly with respect to Kuwaitis missing since 1991.

My country obviously aligns itself with the Arab perspective of cautioning against the war option at a time when the international community is mobilized to combat terrorism, following the tragedy of September 11 and against the backdrop of the destruction and bloodshed prevailing in the Palestinian territories. These are issues that are crying for urgent attention and lasting solutions. They deserve the concerted action of the international community. No amount of prevarication and neglect will therefore be a substitute for dealing with the core problem in the Middle East: the occupation of Arab lands by Israel.

President Bush's speech to the General Assembly on 12 September galvanized the international community because, as expected, it opened up the diplomatic option in the current crisis. That was a wise and very encouraging move, which accepted the primacy of international collective security. In his landmark speech on the same day, the Secretary-General made a number of important observations on the necessity and sagacity of working together to uphold international law and to maintain international order. Only by multilateral action, he said, can we defeat terrorism and tyranny, give people a chance to escape the ugly misery of poverty, ignorance and disease, and ensure the benefits and opportunities of open markets for all. Therefore, we could not agree with him more when he says that this universal Organization has a special place.

In conclusion, Sir, as the late United States President, John F. Kennedy, stated:

> "When written in Chinese, the word 'crisis' is composed of two characters. One represents danger, and the other represents opportunity".

In essence, we are here today to make a fateful choice between these two conflicting alternatives.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Djibouti for his kind words.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Israel in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion on the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the representative of Israel to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lancry (Israel) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Liechtenstein, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Like many other speakers before us, we welcome this open debate on an issue that is of singular importance for global security as well as for the future of this Organization. It would hardly be appropriate to say that discussions on the topic before us have never been held before — quite the contrary, every aspect has been covered from every possible angle. But not in this format and not in this room, and this is what is needed, since any action of the Council on this issue requires the broadest possible consensus.

There can be no doubt that all Security Council resolutions, on Iraq or otherwise, must be implemented in full. Defiance and non-compliance with legally binding decisions undermine the effectiveness, as well as the credibility, of the Organization as a whole and must, therefore, not be accepted. It is thus imperative that the Council act with common resolve to enable the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) to resume the work that the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) was never able to finish, and that Iraq extend unconditional cooperation and provide full and unrestricted access to all sites and facilities UNMOVIC chooses to visit. The destruction and removal of all weapons of mass destruction, as mandated by the Council 12 years ago, must finally be carried out. While a new resolution to this end is not strictly needed from a legalistic point of view, it is at this point certainly a political necessity. Given the implications of the present situation, clarity of the rules governing compliance by Iraq will be of the essence. Furthermore, these rules must be designed in a manner that ensures that the inspection process remains credible at all times.

If ensuring full compliance with its decisions is indispensable for the Council's credibility, the Council is, at the same time, also facing another challenge: as an Organization designed to promote peace and, in particular, to provide for the peaceful settlement of disputes, it must do everything possible, and be seen as doing everything possible, to ensure compliance with and implementation of its decisions without resorting to the use of force. Military action should, therefore, only be contemplated if all other means have failed and non-compliance by Iraq has been clearly established.

It is the Security Council that provides for the terms for the inspection regime, and the Council is therefore the arbiter of compliance and implementation, based on the findings of UNMOVIC. In accordance with the Charter, it is also the Council that must authorize the use of force.

There are clearly enormous consequences of the use of armed force in Iraq, which the Council has to weigh carefully before making such a decision. First, there is the risk of further instability in an already deeply troubled region, the existing instability being caused not least by the non-implementation of Security Council resolutions. But there is also the question of what involvement or action the Council foresees for the time after a possible armed intervention. Given these questions and the magnitude of what is at stake, it is of crucial importance that the Council acts with the broadest possible unity and the strongest possible support from the membership as a whole. This — and only this — can provide for the necessary political legitimacy.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Liechtenstein for his kind words.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, first of all I wish to thank you personally, as well as the other Council members, to have granted my request to take the floor before this body, which is the main guarantor of peacekeeping and international security. I am aware of your great abilities as a diplomat, Sir, and therefore I am confident that the Council's work will be productive this month. Let me also thank our friend and colleague, the Ambassador of Bulgaria, who conducted the work of the Council brilliantly during the last month.

We are pleased to see that relations between Iraq and Kuwait, two independent and sovereign States, United Nations Members and members of the Non-Aligned Movement, have once again become normal. We encourage these two friendly countries to continue to do their utmost in order to resolve pending issues. This would contribute to establishing peace, security and stability in the region.

My country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, has been following the question of Iraq very closely and with the greatest attention. During their meeting on 18 September, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned Movement encouraged Iraq and the United Nations to intensify their efforts in the quest for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to all the issues pending between them. The Ministers also insisted on the urgency of a peaceful solution to the question of Iraq in order to preserve the authority and the credibility of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, as well as peace and stability in the region and throughout the world.

There is not the shadow of a doubt that the question of Iraq dominates the current international agenda. Why is that the case? What should we do — or rather, how should we resolve this question? Some advance a multitude of arguments on their side to defend tooth and nail the use of force to achieve their objective. Others provide an opposite viewpoint, preferring the peaceful settlement of disputes. In our humble opinion, and based on the Charter and international law, we should explore all peaceful means to resolve the outstanding problems and should do everything possible to avoid war, which can only cause more suffering for the Iraqi people. The people of Iraq are martyrs who have committed no crime; they have already suffered too much and deserve to suffer no longer. The world would render a great service to the Iraqi people by helping to find a peaceful solution to this question.

We are told that the question of Iraq concerns the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, it is stated unequivocally that Iraq possesses chemical and biological weapons and will have the ability to manufacture nuclear weapons in the near future. In that regard, many countries maintain that it is up to the United Nations — the sole universal international organization — to conduct inspections on the ground and to verify the veracity of the statements made. We are pleased to note that Iraq, in order to prove its sincerity, has unconditionally accepted United Nations inspections. In that context, the Lao People's Democratic Republic calls for the immediate resumption of United Nations inspections in Iraq and expresses the hope that the question of Iraq will thus be resolved swiftly and peacefully.

In today's world, where dialogue and cooperation among States continues to prevail, it is important that the international community call firmly and vigorously for the settlement of disputes through the path of peace. In our view, any conflict, no matter how complex, can and must be resolved peacefully. In that spirit, we appeal to the international community to do all it can in order to resolve the question of Iraq swiftly and, above all, peacefully.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic for his kind words.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Angola. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. I should also like to express my appreciation to the previous President for the able and wise manner in which he conducted the proceedings of this body during his mandate.

Secondly, I should like to acknowledge the foresight of the presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement for requesting that this meeting be convened, and the foresight of the Security Council — particularly that of the current presidency — for convening it, thus allowing for the participation of every Member State in a discussion of the most important and serious international crisis today. The consequences of not reaching a consensus on the issue before us could be far-reaching and could affect each and every Member State, as well as the Organization. The choice before us is between peace and war. And the options are whether or not the international community has a role to play in the resolution of this crisis in a world that is becoming increasingly multilateral.

Angola has always expressed its commitment to the United Nations, especially to the Security Council, whose mandate is to maintain international peace and security. My Government, in joining the United Nations shortly after its independence, affirmed the principles and values that constitute the essence of the Charter of this noble Organization.

My Government condemns any unilateral action by any Member State that threatens international peace and security, betrays the principles of the Organization and undermines its role. Consequently, in 1990, Angola unequivocally condemned the invasion of Kuwait by the military forces of Iraq. My Government is confident in the Security Council's ability to carry out its mandate. Therefore, it is imperative that the Government of Iraq redouble its efforts for the full and immediate implementation of Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 1284 (1999), as they constitute the only internationally recognized avenues towards achieving peace and justice through consensus. Furthermore, the implementation of those two key resolutions can be the cornerstone for a solution of the current crisis. We believe the record of the implementation of those two key resolutions has provided the international community, as well as the Iraqi Government, with the necessary understanding of mutual concerns, thus removing all perceived obstacles to their full and immediate implementation.

During the last few days, the Iraqi Government has expressed its readiness to respect and implement the resolutions of the Security Council, particularly with regard to the unconditional return of inspectors to Iraq. The United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency are the established mechanisms through which that commitment should be carried out. My Government welcomes the progress thus far achieved. However, we share the concern of other Member States in stressing that meaningful progress will only be registered once unconditional and unrestricted inspections actually take place.

I believe that the international community, through the United Nations, and in particular through the Security Council, should continue to work with the Iraqi Government in order to achieve meaningful progress in the resolution of the crisis. Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 1284 (1999), and all subsequent resolutions on the situation in Iraq, remain viable and relevant instruments. Our efforts should therefore be directed at ensuring their full implementation.

In conclusion, Angola believes that before taking any measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, the international community must seek a peaceful solution under the auspices of the United Nations, taking into account that the measures foreseen in Article 42 of the Charter must be taken only as a last resort, and then only if they represent the collective will of the international community as embodied by the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Angola for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I have the pleasure to express to you, Mr. President, our happiness at seeing you preside over this meeting. Allow me also to thank the members of the Security Council for giving us this opportunity to participate in a debate of such great importance. In that regard, we would also like to express our gratitude to South Africa for its initiative in calling for the holding of this meeting in its capacity as the current Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Like other Arab and Islamic countries and the overwhelming majority of the world's peoples and States, Palestine is deeply concerned and harbours

serious apprehensions about what we are witnessing with regard to the increasing possibilities of a new outbreak of war in the Middle East region. We are also worried about the growing possibility of the use of military force against Iraq — a sisterly Arab member country of the United Nations — as well as about the possibility of invading and occupying it. Were such things to occur, they would of course lead to further destruction in Iraq and to further suffering for its people. Moreover, such events would also have profound negative consequences on the region as a whole, encourage extremism and heighten hatred towards those who actually undertook such actions. It is very difficult to imagine stability in either Iraq or the region if such events take place. Using military force or going to war is definitely no solution. It must be avoided.

Despite the beating of war drums we have been hearing recently, there have been some positive developments. On the one hand, this question has been referred to the United Nations instead of taking unilateral action; and, on the other hand, Iraq has accepted the unconditional return of inspectors. We believe we should build on these two elements and that the current crisis should be resolved through a rapid return of inspectors to ensure that there are no weapons of mass destruction, thereby reassuring the international community with regard to this important issue.

The Security Council has adopted enough resolutions on this subject. The recent negotiations in Vienna and Iraq's subsequent position seem to point to the possibility of reaching acceptable arrangements between the United Nations and Iraq with a view to ensuring full compliance with the resolution calling for the destruction of all weapons of mass destruction and verifying that there are no such weapons in Iraq. Nevertheless, if the members of the Council find it necessary to adopt a new resolution, it will be important that such a resolution not contain impossible demands or mandate the use of force in advance. A new Council resolution should serve as a bridge leading to the implementation of its previous resolutions and not as a bridge to war.

Just prior to the last crisis, Arab States had indeed made great headway towards Arab reconciliation with regard to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. The Beirut Summit was a very important step in that direction. We would like to reiterate our commitment to the spirit of the Summit and to its decisions and resolutions, including with regard to cooperating with the Tripartite Commission to resolve the issues of the return of Kuwaiti property and of Kuwaiti prisoners and third-party citizens being held in Iraq.

It is very difficult for the Arab street to believe that the use of force against Iraq would serve to uphold international law and legitimacy or to ensure respect for the resolutions of the Security Council. It is doubly difficult to believe when all Arabs — and indeed the entire world — have witnessed how Security Council resolutions are violated and rejected and how the provisions of international law are flouted by a single State. That State is, of course, Israel, which is considered by the Council to be the only occupying Power in the world today and which, incidentally, has illegally acquired several weapons of mass destruction. Just a few hours ago, Israeli tanks once again destroyed the homes of civilians in Rafah, killing at least five people and injuring forty. What we need here is for Members to try to regain, even partially, credibility for the Council and for this international Organization.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the observer of Palestine for the kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Belarus. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ivanou (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Republic of Belarus has been closely following the developments relating to Iraq, as well as consideration of this issue within the United Nations. We welcome the format of today's meeting of the Council.

Noting that it is necessary for Iraq to implement the United Nations Security Council resolutions, the President and the Government of the Republic of Belarus welcome the decision made by the Iraqi leadership on the resumption of the work of United Nations inspectors in that country without any preliminary conditions. Through this decision, Iraq has demonstrated its aspiration for a constructive dialogue with the United Nations and the international community. Belarus calls upon the States members of the Security Council to support this constructive approach, opening up a political way out of the present complicated situation. We support the outcome of the consultations on this problem held in Vienna.

Belarus cannot agree with the position taken by those States that see the settlement of the Iraqi issue only through the use of force. We support political and diplomatic means for the settlement of this issue under the auspices of the United Nations and stand against any unilateral military actions without relevant United Nations Security Council mandate.

According to the United Nations Charter, the Security Council is the body bearing primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In this connection, the Council should not allow a military action against Iraq, which could result in a major international conflict with unforeseen consequences.

Constructive dialogue between the Iraqi leadership and the United Nations Secretary-General and the international community as a whole and ensuring the unimpeded work of United Nations inspectors are, in our opinion, the key guidelines of agreed international efforts on the road towards a peaceful settlement of the Iraqi issue.

The Republic of Belarus welcomes the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1409 (2002), which considerably simplified the implementation of the oil-for-food programme. We call for further step-by-step mitigation of the United Nations regime of sanctions against Iraq, which undermines the social and economic situation in that country and has led to serious humanitarian consequences for its population.

Belarus seeks political settlements to all disputes on the international agenda. We express hope for an objective consideration of the Iraqi issue and call upon the Security Council to take a balanced decision in the interest of peace and security, not only in the Middle East but on a global scale as well.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Saudi Arabia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to extend to you, Mr. President, my sincere congratulations for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We are fully confident that your capabilities and wisdom will guide the work of the Council to our desired objectives. I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to your predecessor, my friend the Ambassador of Bulgaria, for directing the work of the Council last month. I would also like to extend thanks to my friend, the representative of South Africa, for requesting the convening of this meeting to hear the views of States and their positions vis-à-vis the issue.

Bringing peace, security and stability to the world requires a more active role for the United Nations, as well as an intensification of diplomatic efforts and political endeavours. Undoubtedly, such diplomatic means, as well as a full and in-depth analysis of the different aspects of the problem, its impact and results on the regional and international levels, are the best means of maintaining international peace and security, instead of resorting to the use of force.

The present phase of the situation in the Arabian Gulf region is very sensitive and fraught with a myriad of risks. The matter requires rationality and farsightedness in order to avoid the outbreak of another war that would have unforeseen and unpleasant results leading to instability in the region, and may have an adverse impact on the peace and stability of the entire world. Also, conducting such a war may lead to the rekindling of hatred, hostility, spite, vengeance and violence, as well as to humanitarian catastrophes that the world could very well do without.

Iraq's acceptance of the return of United Nations inspectors, as well as its assurances of facilitating United Nations inspectors mission and its pledge not to impede their work, should lead to accelerating the return of the inspectors to complete their task. The inspectors would be expected to submit a report stating that Iraq is free from weapons of mass destruction and that Iraq is implementing all relevant Security Council resolutions, including the release of Kuwaiti and third country prisoners of war and the return of Kuwaiti property. This would undoubtedly lead to the lifting of the economic sanctions that have been imposed on Iraq and that are hurting the brotherly Iraqi people. This would also help to preserve the unity, security and territorial integrity of Iraq.

In addition to the United Nations insistence that Iraq implement all resolutions of international legality, we cannot ignore the contempt that the Israeli Government has shown for such resolutions. The United Nations is not very satisfied with Israel's implementation of the many resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly.

There is no doubt that the United Nations lack of resolve to ensure the implementation of these resolutions of international legality and the international community's disregard of Israel's refusal to implement them are among the main reasons for the ongoing tragedy and instability in the Middle East. The statement of one minister of the Israeli Government that all Security Council resolutions should be filed in the dustbin brings home for us the fact that Israel is not committed to honouring resolutions of international legality. According to Israel, such resolutions are not to be implemented and have no inherent procedure for implementation. Israel has flouted all resolutions adopted since 1948 and heeds only those warnings made by powerful and influential countries. This in itself is a challenge to international legality and disregard for the peace and security of the region.

Double standards and Israel's lack of commitment to the implementation of the resolutions of international legality diminish the Council's credibility. Indeed, they encourage other countries to flout and disrespect this legality. It cannot be claimed that resolutions not issued under Chapter VII are non-binding; if they are, of what value are they? Security Council resolutions, under whatever chapter they may be adopted, are binding on the international community, particularly since they address issues of international peace and security. They are especially binding on the permanent members of the Security Council, because those countries have participated in drafting and adopting them.

That commitment and the obligation to implement these resolutions have a bearing on the credibility of those States. It is assumed that the Security Council will take practical steps to ensure the implementation of its resolutions when the party concerned refuses to do so, as has occurred in many other parts of the world, including with respect to the Iraqi situation today.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Saudi Arabia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Albania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): We have followed with deep concern the current events in the Middle East, as well as the threat posed to the peace and security of the region and the world by the evil nature of Saddam Hussein's regime.

While the entire international community is united in the fight to eradicate international terrorism, Iraq, with its production of weapons of mass destruction, continues to be a menace to the international community. Today, we in the United Nations face a reality in which one party is pursuing the empty rhetoric of excuses and is in breach of several Security Council resolutions, while the international community has engaged in a long discussion regarding the form and legality of an action that is important and morally justified.

Albania is of the opinion that immediate action by the Security Council is of the utmost importance. We believe that the position of the United States, as stated on 12 September before the General Assembly —

> "We cannot stand by and do nothing while dangers gather. We must stand up for our security and for the permanent rights and hopes of mankind" (*A/57/PV.2, p. 9*) —

is the most realistic position. Albania restates its full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and of the Security Council to find a fair solution to the Iraqi question.

No dictatorial regime that has demonstrated an aggressive nature in international relations, suppresses human rights and commits crimes against its own citizens has the moral right to represent the sovereignty of the people of its country, whose will and ideas are kept bound by the chains of a criminal authority.

Not long ago, Albania was under a dictatorial regime. The results of elections under that regime were 99.99 per cent in favour of Big Brother. In reality, it was a prison for the entire country and State sovereignty was represented by the will of a single dictator. Such dictatorial regimes generate continuous crises to prolong their own existence. In averting such crises in the future, the action of the international community to secure peace and stability in the region is as important as the establishment of freedom and the legal rights of the people who suffer under such totalitarian regimes.

Three years ago, we recognized the difficult position of the Security Council in deciding on the intervention of the international community against the

genocide committed by the criminal regime of Milosevic against the Kosovar Albanians. Many States were undecided with regard to intervention against a sovereign State. Moreover, the propaganda of the Milosevic regime presented the conflict as a clash of civilizations and a threat to Christianity from the Albanian Muslims of Kosovo. In the name of peace, security and the protection of human rights, the action of the international community proved to be right, vital and far-sighted in preventing a human tragedy.

That intervention was meant not to demonstrate prepotency, dominance or a unilateral stand, but to defend the right of the people to live in freedom. It was conceived not to protect Muslim Albanians against the Christian Orthodox Serbs, but to save both from a criminal regime that had kidnapped their rights. The intervention was intended to preserve and guarantee the future of the international system. The humanitarian intervention of the civilized world in Kosovo not only justified itself, but also introduced an important precedent in international relations.

Today, we are facing a situation in which the pre-emptive action of the international community is necessary in order to avert a possible world catastrophe precipitated by the use of weapons of mass destruction by an uncontrolled regime. The strength of our actions depends on the Security Council's decision and our common responsibility towards the people of the world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Albania for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lamani (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset I would like to express our deep appreciation to the President of the Council for convening this open debate on the question of Iraq. I would like also to express our appreciation to the delegation of South Africa for its courageous and constructive initiative on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement in requesting the convening of this important meeting.

In his statement before the annual coordination meeting of Foreign Ministers of members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), held in New York on 17 September 2002, Mr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz, Secretary General of the OIC, stressed that the gravity of the situation in Iraq continues to preoccupy our organization despite the breakthrough in Arab-Iraqi relations earlier this year.

The continuation of the sanctions imposed on Iraq, with their severe social and humanitarian consequences, has inflicted much harm on a whole new generation in Iraq. The Secretary General expressed concern that this will have extremely negative repercussions for this Islamic country for many years to come. He expressed the hope that Iraq would be able to settle all its problems with its sisterly neighbours. Foremost among these problems is the issue of the missing Kuwaitis. It is also hoped that Iraq could settle its problems with the United Nations, particularly with regard to the return of the United Nations inspectors to resume and complete their mandated tasks.

Following that meeting, the OIC Foreign Ministers issued a statement welcoming the decision of Iraq concerning the return of the United Nations inspectors to Iraq, in response to the appeals made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, by the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, and by Arab, Islamic and other States as a first step towards a comprehensive solution to relations between Iraq and the Security Council. Normalized relations would lead to implementation of all Security Council resolutions, to the lifting of sanctions imposed on Iraq, to respecting its security and sovereignty and to establishing the Middle East as a zone free from weapons of mass destruction.

The Ministers called upon all States to abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to refrain from the threat or use of force against Iraq, and to respect its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

It has been repeatedly stated before this body that there should be no double standards when it debates the issue of non-compliance with its resolutions by any Member State. The history of the United Nations and its records testify to the fact that some of its Member States have defied its resolutions. Israel is a clear example. However, the United Nations, including the Security Council, has not resorted to the use of force against such countries. I would like to refer to an article published in the Inter Press Service on 11 October 2002, quoting Professor Stephen Zunes,

Associate Professor of Politics at the University of San Francisco and Middle East Editor for Foreign Policy in Focus. He wrote that there were an additional 91 Security Council resolutions about countries other than Iraq that were currently being violated, 31 of which dealt with Israel.

We strongly support the call for seeking a peaceful solution to the issue of Iraq in a way that preserves the authority and the credibility of the United Nations, as well as the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Iraq, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law.

Undoubtedly, the recent decision by Iraq to allow the United Nations inspectors to return unconditionally and to facilitate their task, as well as the positive outcome of the meetings held in Vienna between Iraq and the United Nations, are steps in the right direction. They enable the Security Council to play its mandated role in the maintenance of international peace and security and spare the region the catastrophes of war and destruction and alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people, which has lasted far too long and must be ended.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Cambodia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ouch (Cambodia): May I first of all once again congratulate you, Mr. President, for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I had the benefit of addressing the Security Council under your able leadership on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the open meeting on progress achieved in the area of counter terrorism. At that meeting I reported on the vigorous efforts of ASEAN countries to jointly and individually combat terrorism. It is therefore with profound sadness that we witness the heinous and disastrous attacks by terrorists against two ASEAN member States, Indonesia and the Philippines. I wish to express my deepest condolences to the Government and people of Indonesia, the Government and people of Australia and other countries for the massive loss of life and deep suffering caused by the attack of international terrorism in Bali, and also to the Government and the people of the Philippines for the terrorist bombings today. We must once again underscore the importance of regional and international cooperation against international terrorism.

May I also express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his inspiring message delivered yesterday by the Deputy Secretary-General, Madam Louise Frechette.

May I also express my gratitude to Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo of South Africa for requesting this emergency meeting on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We fully agree with him that the Security Council is being asked to consider a matter that has important repercussions for the entire United Nations. The maintenance of peace and security lies at the heart of the United Nations Charter, and the Security Council, being the main body dealing with collective security, should be accountable to the entire membership of the United Nations. As Mr. Kumalo stated yesterday, the Security Council has to uphold the aspirations of peace and security for the United Nations as a whole, and not just for the select few.

The holding of this open meeting of the Security Council will allow us, the 191 Members of the United Nations, to express our views regarding the grave and dangerous situation in which we find ourselves today. We should strive for a momentum of peace to prevail in this grave situation and must at all costs avoid war.

The situation in Iraq has been an issue that has been the subject of discussion in this body for more than 12 years now. Nine resolutions have been adopted that not only called for Iraq to allow inspection and the destruction of weapons of mass destruction, but also on the return of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and the return of Kuwaiti property. We should therefore not lose sight of the fact that adequate machinery already exists within the United Nations system to deal with this issue. We believe that peaceful efforts in the framework of United Nations mechanisms should be fully utilized and, if necessary, strengthened. We therefore agree with the majority of Member States that all avenues must be exhausted and that the use of force should only be utilized as a means of last resort. War will have disastrous consequences and create a humanitarian disaster of enormous proportions.

We therefore strongly urge Iraq to comply with all Security Council resolutions unconditionally and in

an unfettered manner. We are pleased to note that Iraq has responded to the calls of the United Nations Secretary-General and many Member States, with a positive attitude in its discussions in Vienna with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and by sending letters to the Secretary-General declaring its acceptance of the return of United Nations weapons inspectors to Iraq unconditionally.

We trust now that the speedy return of the weapons inspectors is imperative as a means to alleviate international tensions in this grave and dangerous situation. Compliance by Iraq with all United Nations resolutions should allow the sanctions imposed on Iraq for the past twelve years, which have caused innumerable sufferings for its innocent civilian population, to be lifted as soon as possible.

The President *(spoke in French)*: The next speaker is the representative of Jamaica. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): Mr. President, I wish to thank you and the members of the Council for allowing Jamaica to participate in this open debate in response to the request of the Permanent Representative of South Africa, acting on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. This is a matter of great importance for the world community.

Under Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council is entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of the membership of the Organization. It further requires that in discharging these responsibilities, the Council shall act in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

As it is thus accountable to the wider membership, it is fitting and proper that the Council should hear the views of Member States on a matter of major importance involving the issue of war and peace. There is a great deal at stake, as the eyes of the world are on the Security Council and on the United Nations, and whatever is decided will have significant implications for the future of the Organization and for the maintenance of international peace and security.

At the heart of the matter is the question of compliance with the decisions of the Council by Member States and the enforcement options that the Council may choose to exercise.

The Security Council's resolutions 661 (1990), 687 (1991) and 715 (1991) among others, imposed certain obligations to be fulfilled by Iraq, which may only have been partially implemented. It should be clear that Iraq is obliged to comply with these resolutions, which require the destruction and cessation of further development of weapons of mass destruction and the fulfilment of certain obligations with respect to the return of Kuwaiti property and missing persons. These resolutions should be fully implemented.

Iraq should give unfettered access to the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) inspectors in order to verify compliance with its disarmament obligations. Jamaica is hopeful that such arrangements can be made in view of the assurances given by Iraq and in the light of the agreement reached on during meetings with the Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, Mr. Hans Blix, in Vienna from 30 September to 2 October 2002.

We believe that the matter can be resolved by peaceful means. The prospect of war should be avoided with all its manifold consequences, including death and destruction and the humanitarian tragedy that is the bitter legacy of war.

There is not much information available to us on the direction in which the Council is moving, but we would expect it to make reasonable arrangements for inspections to be carried out in Iraq as soon as possible.

We must also register our concern at aspects of the decision-making process in the Council, especially with respect to the role of the elected members and the pre-eminence of the members with the veto power. Our view is that the full involvement of the elected members of the Council at all levels of the decision-making process is vital for giving legitimacy and authority to the Council's decisions.

We ask the Security Council to act in a fair and objective manner, bearing in mind its responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and the avoidance of military confrontation. We are concerned that the integrity of the system of collective security under the Charter will be endangered by any unilateral action, which would weaken the fabric of international law.

We make these observations because of the value we place in the United Nations system and the scheme for collective security under the Charter. It is of great importance for all of us in the international community and particularly for small States. We should strengthen it and guard against the acceptance of any doctrine or policy which would circumvent the multilateral system and undermine the principles that sustain a world order of peace and security, the non-use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the sovereign equality of States. Jamaica would urge that whatever action the Council should take, it should not compromise these principles.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I thank the representative of Jamaica for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Zimbabwe. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Jokonya (Zimbabwe): Mr. President, we are delighted to see you presiding over this very important and historic debate on a subject that has been described by some as the survival of the human race.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank our brother and colleague Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa, who has assisted you in facilitating this debate.

The debate before us concerns a grave issue with serious implications for multilateralism in the conduct of our business in the United Nations. At risk is a Member of this Organization that is small by all standards and is being threatened with military action by powerful neighbours.

Iraq, whose case has been before the Security Council since 1991, risks having its case dealt with outside of this body — a body whose responsibility it is to provide international peace and security for all of humankind. The whole world therefore expects those to whom these positions of heavy responsibility have been entrusted to desist from pursuing selfish national interests. Instead, they should strive to preserve the authority and credibility of the Charter of the Organization.

The Council may recall that, when it was dealing with the question of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1991, Zimbabwe was presiding over this body. We strove then to put together an international coalition to deal with the matter. The result was a unified action by the international community to rectify untoward international behaviour on the part of Iraq. That result was a demonstration of what multilateralism can achieve. To this day there are no regrets as to those actions.

The Charter of the United Nations encourages the peaceful settlement of disputes. Any action taken by a Member State before the dispute-settlement channels offered by the United Nations have been exhausted represents a complete breach of international law. In particular, unilateral measures taken outside of the United Nations may register short-term gains but will be very harmful in the long term. Yesterday we had the opportunity to hear from some delegations about the possible consequences for the subregion if the issue of Iraq is handled outside the United Nations.

The Government of Iraq has agreed to receive United Nations inspectors and to give them full and unfettered access to all the areas they need to inspect. Members of the Organization need to be vigilant in guarding against tendencies to try to settle disputes outside of the provisions of the Charter. We have resolution 687 (1991) on the inspection of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Let us use that resolution and wait for a report from the inspectors. Iraq must comply with resolution 687 (1991) and other relevant resolutions.

My delegation finds it ironic that, at a time when the Iraqi authorities have agreed to the return of United Nations inspectors, there is talk of adopting a new resolution, with stiff requirements meant either to humiliate the Iraq authorities or to force Iraq to reject the conditions and so stop the inspectors from travelling to that country. This is the old gunboat diplomacy against weak adversaries, and here the goalposts are being shifted. We believe that this world body's responsibility is to disarm the Iraqi war machinery, particularly with respect to dangerous weapons of mass destruction — chemical, biological and nuclear. The question of regime change is a new phenomenon which makes clear that, instead of being true to their word, as usual, the mighty are bent on shifting the goalposts to suit their agendas.

No State, big or small, should threaten other States with the possible use of weapons of mass destruction. We call for resolute action by this body against such States. We are of the view that Iraq's level

of destructive capacity should also be of concern to its neighbours, which, in any case, feel the greatest threat. We have not heard cries from these neighbouring States about potential threats from Iraq, except, of course, from Israel.

Like other Members who have spoken before us, my delegation is concerned that, while we are — rightly — rushing to render useless Iraq's capacity to produce and to own weapons of mass destruction, we do not see the same zeal on the part of members of the Council to do away with the weapons of mass destruction that they themselves own. Other members of the Council have even decided not to sign disarmament treaties that seek to make the world free from these dangerous weapons.

We are also concerned that, whereas there is a rush to have Iraq abide by Security Council resolutions, the same rush is not displayed when it comes to Israel, which has flouted no less than 28 Security Council resolutions. The murdering and maiming of Palestinian people and the destruction of Palestinian homes does not, in our view, seem to concern the Council. Israel, after violating Security Council resolutions with impunity, has been shielded by the same members which today want to wage war on Iraq. It is common knowledge in the Security Council and to one and all that that country has weapons of mass destruction. It, too, must be disarmed. The Security Council should address this double standard in order not to bring the Charter of the United Nations into disrepute.

Let me conclude by reiterating that we need a solution which will quickly put an end to the sanctions, which have brought so much suffering to the people of Iraq. Let the inspectors proceed with their business, so that the suffering of the people of Iraq and the threat of weapons of mass destruction can be buried in the pages of history once and for all.

The question before us today is about doing the correct thing. It is about the credibility of multilateralism, adherence to international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes. My delegation urges the Council to opt for multilateralism and for the upholding of international law, which gives credibility to this body. The law of the jungle should not creep into this Organization.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Zimbabwe for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, sincerely to thank you for giving us the opportunity to address the Council. We wish also to thank you for convening this important meeting, at which Member States can express their views on the very serious Iraqi situation, which has greatly deteriorated. The tension prevailing in the world because of the question of Iraq is indeed a matter of concern and a threat to international peace and security.

Qatar has always believed in the important role of the United Nations, the Security Council in particular, in maintaining international peace and security. That is why the State of Qatar has always expressed its full support for all resolutions of international legitimacy aimed at the achievement of peace and security in the world. Following the terrorist attack against the World Trade Center in New York, Qatar clearly and unequivocally expressed its condemnation of international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including State terrorism. We shall always work in conjunction with all States to combat terrorism in all its forms. My delegation would like to express its condemnation of the terrorist attack that took place in Bali on Saturday and to convey sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the friendly people and Government of Indonesia.

A few months ago, many political complications emerged on the international scene, and they should be resolved through recourse to international law. International law should be fully respected. The political situation is changing on a daily basis, giving rise to new and contradictory tendencies.

We are grateful to the Non-Aligned Movement for requesting the convening of this meeting. There has been a rapid development in events that may lead to the outbreak of a war whose consequences would extend to all the States of the region and beyond.

We have welcomed the outcome of the Beirut Arab Summit held last March, as well as the decisions and resolutions adopted there, including the final

declaration concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait. It called, inter alia, for full cooperation to resolve the problem of Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees and third country nationals and the return of Kuwaiti property to Kuwait. We consider that to be a step in the right direction.

We are very optimistic about the decision of Iraq to accept the return of the international inspectors and to comply with Security Council resolutions, as well as about the resumption of the dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations. We also welcome Iraq's declaration that it has no weapons of mass destruction. We had hoped that those developments would lead to international détente and that the United Nations and the great Powers in the Security Council would immediately allow the return of the inspectors in order to assess the situation. That is what the situation calls for, and it would be fully in keeping with the principles of the Charter and of international law.

We all know what led to the fall of the League of Nations: the unilateral decision by the world Powers at that time to take decisions outside the context of international law and legitimacy. That led to a destructive war that claimed millions of lives. The United Nations was established in 1945 to prevent the repetition of such a war. Its Charter was drafted very carefully to make it incumbent on all States, and the founding States in particular, to respect the Charter and accept the rule of international law in international relations.

We would not like any State to act outside international law as enshrined in the Charter or refuse to respect international law. That is why we are calling for full respect for resolutions of international legitimacy. We consider the Security Council to be the only body mandated to decide what necessary steps should be taken in order to enforce compliance by any State with international law, without discrimination.

The current situation is extremely dangerous. It may lead to the destruction of an entire region and even have consequences for States outside the region, to say nothing of its negative impact on the current alliance to combat terrorism. We believe that such a conflict would lead to an increase in and spread of terrorism. Given the current situation, we must find a peaceful solution and refrain from the use of force. It is the duty of all the States Members of the Organization to work together to put an end to the crisis and to resolve it politically on the basis of United Nations resolutions and respect for international law.

We should give up selectivity and double standards when dealing with the issue of weapons of mass destruction and respect for international law. The Council must be transparent in its working methods; the United Nations does not deal with all States in the same way. Security Council resolutions relating to Israel must be applied with the same seriousness and insistence. Israel has an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and refuses to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We call upon international law to be applied so that Israeli installations can be placed under comprehensive safeguards.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Qatar for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Sri Lanka. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mahendran (Sri Lanka): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to assure you of our full cooperation. I would also like to record our deep appreciation for the excellent work done by the representative of Bulgaria during his presidency of the Council last month.

We thank you, Sir, for having convened this open debate on the matter before us, at the request of the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Sri Lanka has long urged Iraq to fully comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions and respect its international commitments so as to avoid a further escalation of tensions in the region. We believe that Iraq should comply with Security Council resolutions immediately and unconditionally and that the hand of the Council should be strengthened, since it is the Security Council that has the primary responsibility under the United Nations Charter to preserve the peace.

The Secretary-General, in his statement, conveyed the same message and warned the Council against division. It is therefore abundantly clear that the time has come for all Members of the United Nations to give the necessary support in the Security Council for the weapons inspectors to return to Iraq

with all the powers they need for a thorough regime of inspection. The Secretary-General said that Iraq's decision to readmit the inspectors without conditions is an important first step, but only a first step. Full compliance remains indispensable, and it has not yet happened. Iraq must implement the disarmament programmes required by the Council's resolutions.

Sri Lanka welcomes the decision of the Government of Iraq to allow the weapons inspectors entry into the country without any conditions. We hope that Iraq's decision will pave the way for the weapons inspectors to resume, without further delay, their work in that country towards the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

In order to have access to whatever the inspectors may wish to look into, it may well be necessary — if the Security Council deems it so — to pass a new resolution, strengthening the inspectors' hands so that there are no weaknesses or ambiguities, and the new measures must be firm, effective, credible and reasonable.

Therefore, the Sri Lanka delegation recommends to the Council that we act in a way that removes the lacuna that was present in the 1991 inspection regime and strengthens the hand of the Council, as well as the Secretary-General, by engaging in a cooperative effort to establish guidelines in order for the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to undertake the inspections comprehensively.

We appeal to Iraq to cooperate fully with the United Nations in order to make the Organization an effective instrument in maintaining peace, as stipulated very clearly and unambiguously by the Charter.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Sri Lanka for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Nepal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): Allow me first to congratulate you, Mr. President, and through you, your country, Cameroon, for the guidance you have been affording the Security Council in the cause of international peace and security. I vividly remember how profoundly the Economic and Social Council benefited from your leadership only last year in the cause of development, and I wish to express my delegation's support for your efforts in steering the deliberations here to a fruitful and just conclusion.

On 12 September 2002, the Secretary-General set the tone of this year's general debate when he said that the Middle East, Iraq and South Asia constitute the existing threats to international peace and security. He also explained why multilateralism offers the best possible solutions to such problems. Today, under your able presidency, Sir, the Council is debating the situation in Iraq, one of those great hotspots in the international security landscape. My delegation should like to hope and believe that the deliberations here would be taken on board while charting our collective course on the very sensitive and complex issue before the Council.

Nepal joined the United Nations out of her conviction that the Organization was the best and only way to go about averting the scourges of wars and devoting all available energy to the promotion of peace, development and human dignity. In the 47 years since then, Nepal has always worked hard and responsibly, be it on the Security Council, on which she has had the honour to serve twice, or elsewhere within the United Nations system, including in United Nations peacekeeping operations, or outside it, in the interest of peace and security around the world, as well as for the development and the welfare of humanity.

Nepal believes that membership in the United Nations comes with an undeniable responsibility to ensure that the Charter principles are always upheld in the pursuit of the purposes of the Organization. Respect for the sovereign equality of all members, the peaceful settlement of international disputes and avoiding the threat or use of force to violate the territorial integrity or political independence of any State constitute the inviolable principles of the conduct of international relations. Likewise, the fulfilment of obligations in good faith, providing assistance to the United Nations in its Charter actions, and non-intervention in issues essentially within domestic jurisdiction constitute other core principles that must be respected as well.

Nepal's firm belief in and commitment to the solemn purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations flow directly from, and are deeply engraved in, the constitution of our country. Accordingly, Nepal has always abided by both the

spirit and words of all those principles and purposes, and our passion to do so remains as strong as ever. Let me also add that Nepal's own experience as a victim of terrorist violence at home, deflecting the already scant resources that could otherwise be employed to propel development, has further reinforced our commitment to the twin purposes of peace and development. More than ever before, we are convinced that one will not be achieved without the other.

I made reference to the United Nations Charter principles and Nepal's convictions because we believe that the situation in Iraq, as well as that existing between Iraq and Kuwait, cannot be addressed without unflinching commitment on the part of all Member States to these very purposes and principles of the United Nations. We must derive our strength, moral and legal as well as otherwise, from the framework of the United Nations Charter and international laws that reflect our collective conscience. This is the view that Nepal has always maintained at the United Nations and within the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), whose statement yesterday at the Council we support.

At the NAM ministerial meeting in Durban last April, we welcomed the assurances given by the Republic of Iraq to respect the independence, sovereignty and security of the State of Kuwait and to ensure its territorial integrity. We underscore the importance of implementing such policies to ease tensions and to promote understanding in the region, and call for action that would place those guarantees in an operational framework, manifest not only in good intentions but also in good-neighbourly relations and non-interference in one another's domestic affairs.

In the same vein, we also call on all sides to respect in spirit and in action the independence, sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Iraq by not using external force, unless clearly authorized by the Council as a measure of last resort. Until other Charter measures have all been utilized, particular care should be taken before setting out to ignite a spark in an already volatile region — a spark which could well spread to the entire world. We also firmly believe that the sanctions on Iraq should be lifted so that the harsh suffering of its people, including women, children and the elderly, can be halted and stability and security in the region be promoted.

In the context of current developments having grave implications for the situation in Iraq, Nepal welcomes the most recent resumption of dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations and the events that have followed, which should ensure a complete implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions. In that connection, I wish to place on record our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts to address the situation in Iraq while upholding the ideals of the United Nations in dealing with these issues.

In that context, while we firmly maintain that there is no room for action against Iraq — or against any other State for that matter — outside the United Nations Charter, we also call on Iraq to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and to assure the world through convincing action that there is no impending danger from their side to international peace and security.

Likewise, we are firm in our conviction that multilateralism is the only acceptable path to ensuring collective global security. Unilateral action, however pious its objective may be, undermines the integrity of international law and flouts the fundamental principles of the rule of law, causing uncertainties and the loss of hope, especially among the weak and vulnerable Members of the Organization. Full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions by all parties constitutes the only means for establishing durable peace, security and stability in the region and elsewhere.

Finally, as Nepal is duty-bound in its commitment to maintaining international peace and security and to making the world a safer place to live in for ourselves and for posterity, we call on the Council to harness this public meeting to find a peaceful and just way to ensure peace and security in the region and at the global level and to avoid the devastating scourges of war.

We should like to believe that a peaceful solution should be possible if we collectively resort to making the United Nations a genuine centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of our common purposes, so clearly and categorically spelled out in Article 1 of the Charter of the Organization.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Nepal for his kind words.

There are a number of speakers remaining on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour, and with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I intend to suspend the meeting now.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.